

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS



HUNGARY



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TWO YOUNG PEASANTS WITH FRESHLY GATHERED WILD STRAWBERRIES.

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS  
**HUNGARY**

BY  
H. TORNAI DE KÖVÉR  
" "

CONTAINING TWELVE FULL-PAGE  
ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

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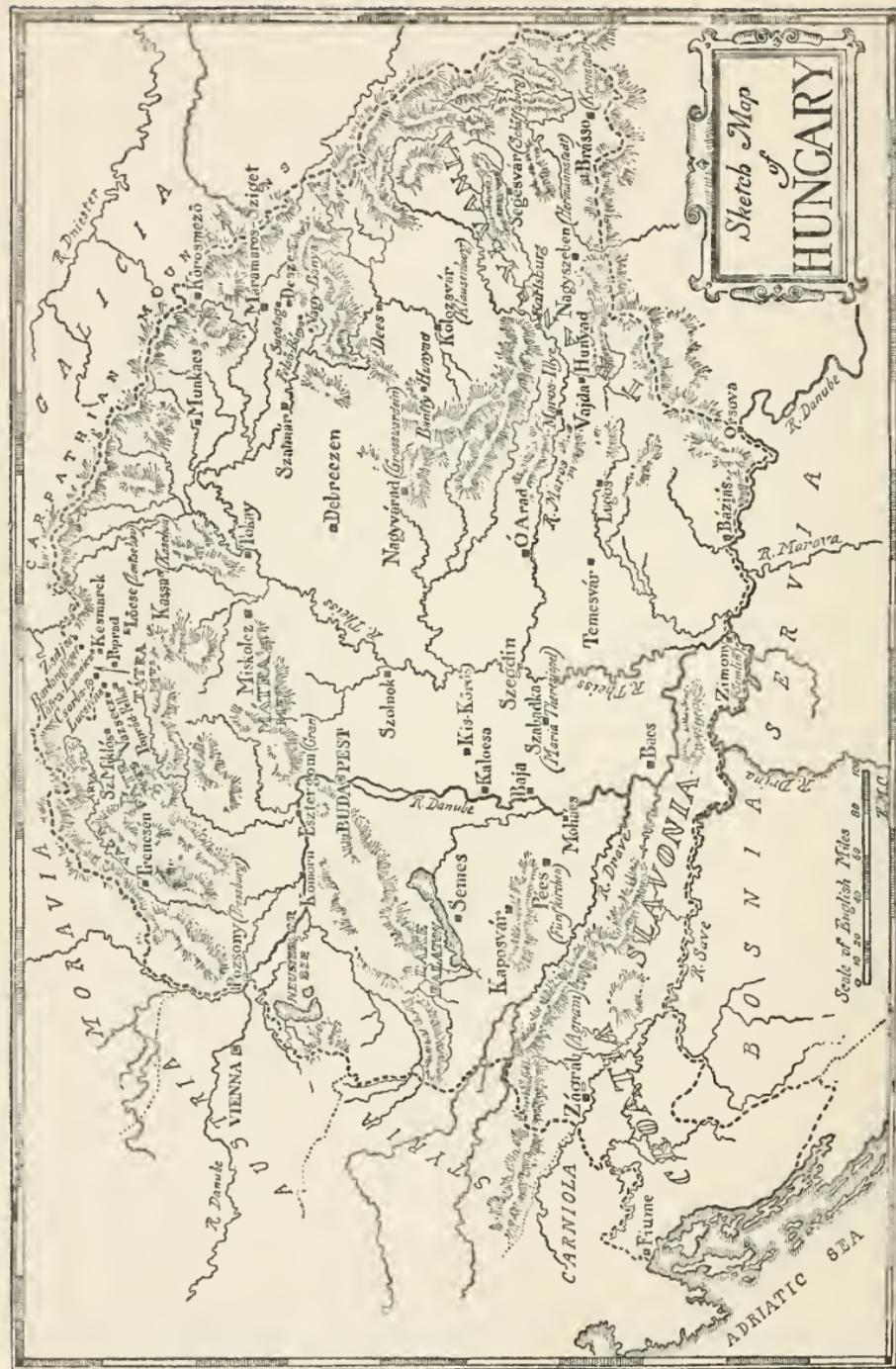
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BY ADRIAN AND MARIANNE STOKES

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*Sketch Map  
of  
HUNGARY*



# A PEEP AT HUNGARY

## CHAPTER I

### A GLIMPSE OF HUNGARY'S HISTORY

THERE is no other country in Europe that has been so much wronged when written about as Hungary. This is not to be wondered at, as both the language and race differ greatly from the other nations dispersed over Europe, and as a fighting people the Hungarians always made and had plenty of enemies. The origin of this undoubtedly Asiatic race is not established to this very day, many researches have been made to find traces of the lost brothers, who, according to folklore, still exist in the heart of Asia, but with no definite result. Some maintain that they are Turko-Tartaric, others that they are descendants of the Fin-Ugor people, and most likely they are a mixture of both. Their language proves them to be Orientals from some inner part of Asia.

There is a pretty legend about the origin of the Magyars, stating them to be descendants of Nimrod, who is said to have been the father of Hunyor and

## A Peep at Hungary

Magyar. These two sons, whilst hunting in distant lands, came suddenly face to face with some beautiful fairies of the woods, and carried them away as their wives. But they also saw that the country they had strayed into was rich in pasture-land, so on returning to their own country they easily gained their father's consent to settle on the newly discovered territory. Hunyor and his tribe settled in the country beyond the Volga, Magyar and his people along the Don.

After many generations the Huns (descendants of Hunyor) became so numerous that they decided to emigrate from their country, and soon overran the greater part of Central Europe, led by their great leader Attila, called "the Scourge of God." A great kingdom was founded, but was soon overthrown, owing to the constant strife between Attila's two sons. A remnant of these people settled in Transylvania, where they subsequently mixed with the incoming Magyars, and exist to this very day in Erdély (Transsylvania), in the south-east of Hungary. Some of the Huns returned to their original country, and it is from them that the Magyars heard of the rich soil to be found in the west. After a few centuries they emigrated in that direction. But apart from this legend, who and from where the Magyars came before they settled in their present country we can only guess by their ancient customs, religion, legends, and language. They came in under the leadership of the Seven Dukes, who led their own and many other wandering tribes that followed them

## A Glimpse of Hungary's History

into the present country, which was then but thinly populated by Germans, Slovaks, and Slovens. All these they defeated in the great battles of the Honfoglalás (Home-making). The first ruler was Árpád. At the end of the tenth century they began to embrace the Christian religion : until then they had been heathens. They had adored one supreme being called Isten and other lesser spirits, and had held their religious ceremonies in the woods by the side of springs.

It is a great mistake to think that they were barbarians. On the contrary, the leaders and better classes were evidently more cultured than most European nations at that time. The workmanship of their old jewels and arms shows them to have had Persian culture. But they had living amongst them many wild nomadic people, who for many years caused uneasiness. Whenever they appeared, plunder and bloodshed was the outcome. On their sturdy, fleet little horses they swept down unawares and with great swiftness upon the neighbouring countries, and penetrated even as far as France. In Spain there is a saying to this day to frighten naughty children with—"The Ungaros are coming." This may be an old saying, or it may be fear of the gipsies that gave rise to it, because of these there are plenty speaking the Hungarian tongue even in Spain.

The first Christian King of Hungary was Vayik, who was christened when a youth, and received the Christian name of Stephen. There were several risings in order to abolish the new religion and return

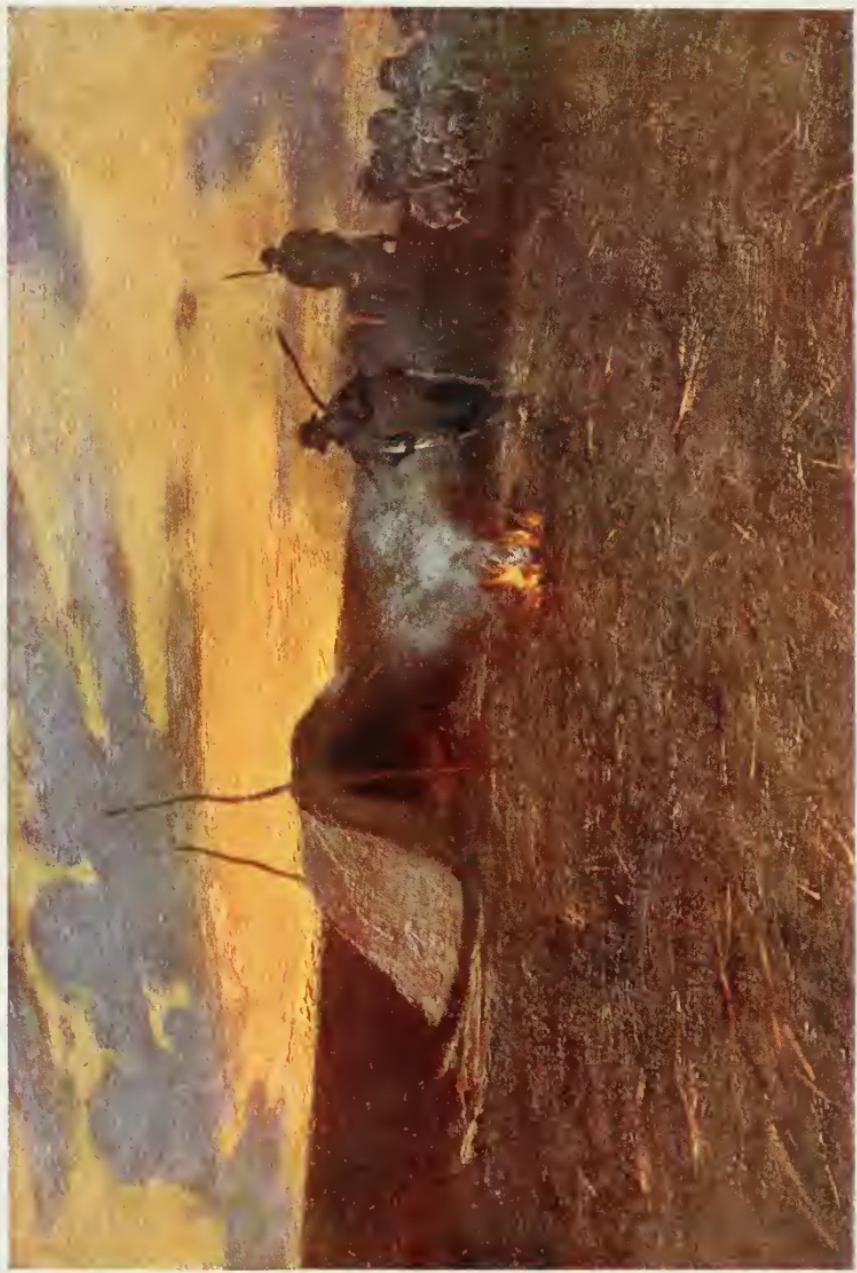
## A Peep at Hungary

to paganism, but under the wise and strong hand of King Stephen the people eventually gave up their nomadic habits, the worship of spirits and the offering of sacrifices were done away with. Before the reign of Stephen, the Táltos-ok (priests of the old Shamanism) were the leaders of the people in matters of religion. The favourite sacrifice was a snow-white stallion, offered to Hadur, the god of war.

After the death of the last male descendant of the house of Árpád, the Anjous reigned in Hungary. The pages of Hungarian history are marked by violence and bloodshed. There was the ever-recurring Mongol invasion and the Turkish raids into the country. The greatest defender of Christianity was Hunyady János (John Hunyady), who, with the aid of his great strategic knowledge and bravery, kept the Turks at bay for many years. Not only Hungary but all the Western nations must feel indebted to this hero, who spent his life in keeping the Osman out of Western Europe. It was owing to his great fame that his son was elected King of Hungary. The Turks, after their last great defeat by John Hunyady, left Hungary in peace for over sixty years.

Nothing is precisely known of the origin of the Hunyadys : John is supposed to have been a shepherd in his early youth. This great champion of Christianity rose from obscurity to the highest rank in the country, and his son Matthias, styled Matthias Corvinus, became King of Hungary in 1458, and through his genius reformed Hungary and the Hungarians. They were a purely fighting nation.





MAGYAR SHEPHERDS IN EASTERN HUNGARY.

## A Glimpse of Hungary's History

Under Matthias Corvinus the flower of the renaissance blossomed in Hungary. He spent thousands on his world-renowned library. He introduced the best sculptors, painters, and goldsmiths from Italy, and the latter combined their art with the remaining patterns of the ancient trinkets of the Hungarians, and out of this union sprang the wonderful gold enamel works and jewels, mostly made at that time in Erdély (Transylvania). To-day a necklace of this kind of work is priceless, and we may find several examples in the old noble families of Hungary and Transylvania.

King Matthias was the most wealthy and most luxurious ruler at that time in Europe, but he was also manly, upright, and, above all, wise and just. At his Court all underhand actions were despised, and he never stooped to use poison to attain his political ends as his brother kings and princes of that time did in Italy and France. The Turks feared him, the princes of other countries did homage to him. And the stronghold of Buda at that time was the centre of European court life, into which Beatrix, King Matthias' second wife, the daughter of the King of Naples, brought court etiquette. It became more and more refined, and gained the reputation of being the seat of learning and culture.

Matthias Corvinus died without leaving a legitimate heir to his throne, this causing many disasters and the decline of the Hungarian nation in the subsequent period, the greatest disaster being the battle of Mohács, in which the flower of Hungarian

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manhood was ruthlessly destroyed by the Turks, who had entered the country in great force. The ruler at that time was King Béla, who could not collect a large army because of the jealousies and quarrellings of his two greatest commanders, both leading Hungarian noblemen. He went to war with an unprepared army of 20,000 men; all of these perished in battle or whilst trying to escape the horrible massacre that followed. The heroism of the young king and his 20,000 followers was of no avail against a well-organised army of 300,000 Turks. They were but a handful, and were swept away like dry leaves before a storm. It was then that the Sultan of Turkey, Soliman, rode into the stronghold of Buda and delivered it up to his soldiers to pillage. The Turks worked great havoc among the beautiful art treasures, and the wonderful library of King Matthias was destroyed and many of the documents relating to Hungary's nobility were burnt, lost, destroyed, or taken to Turkey.

After the disastrous battle of Mohács, Hungary, for over a hundred and fifty years, was under the Turkish yoke. Many deeds of heroism were done in these years. The Turks, after their conquest, made no attempt to bring order or civilisation into the country they had taken, the cities of which they burnt to the ground. On the contrary, they only sacked her of her riches, depopulated her most fertile districts, and drove thousands of nobles and peasants into slavery. The slave markets of Turkey were full of Hungarians at that time.

## A Glimpse of Hungary's History

Until the reign of Matthias Corvinus only one occupation was deemed suitable, and that was fighting. Fighting against the Germans, Turks, and Tartars was the chief joy of the Hungarians. By their deeds of heroism they attained riches and received nobility and distinction. The great ambition was to attain to nobility and a higher social degree. The cause of many a disaster, too, was that all these petty nobles and great commanders were for ever at loggerheads. Spite, intrigue, and envy weakened their ranks on every side and made them a ready prey to the Turks. When the evil was done, they had plenty of opportunities of proving their noble patriotism and undaunted courage. But most of these feats of bravery were of no avail to themselves, as all the great heroes of that time perished fighting whilst defending their strongholds, with a few hundreds or thousands of men, against the formidable Turkish army. Szondy, Losonczy, and Dobó are names that will live as long as the memory of Hungarian deeds endures.

In the case of the defence of Eger, under the commander Dobó, the women of the stronghold played a great part in the keeping of it—for a time at least. The women fought side by side with their dear ones, snatching the swords out of the hands of the dead and fighting for life itself. They poured boiling pitch and oil on to the Turks who were trying to scale the walls. But the many deeds of bravery were of no avail, and one stronghold after the other was taken by them.

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Another instance of patriotic heroism was the noble death of Zrinyi at Szigetvár, who, with the few hundred men left him after weeks of fighting, rushed out of his burning castle—which had been set on fire by the Turks—into the midst of the Turkish army, intent on selling his life dearly—and dying the death of a hero. It would take many pages to give a full account of all these deeds of bravery. At last the Hungarians turned to their great enemy, the Germans—that is, the house of Hapsburg—for help. But that country had always been jealous of the political liberties of Hungary and the independent spirit of her nobility. To that Austria for the most part looked on, and to a certain degree helped to undermine Hungary's strength. It was only when Vienna itself was threatened by the Turks that Austria made up her mind to act against the invader, and, although so late to take action, succeeded in putting an end to the Turkish rule; and in this way Hungary also was freed from her burden, after enduring the rule of her conquerors for many years. Many battles were fought between the Austrians and Hungarians, too, before peace was made. It was during the Austrian and Turkish fighting that the Hungarians accepted the members of the house of Hapsburg as hereditary rulers, to be called Kings of Hungary according to their old Constitution. In Austria the legitimate title is Emperor of Austria. In the latter part of the Turkish rule the Hungarians, under Rákoczy, the Duke of Transylvania, tried to liberate themselves from the Turkish and Austrian

## A Glimpse of Hungary's History

yoke. But it was only under the reign of Maria-Theresa that the Hungarians were quite reconciled to their self-chosen rulers. This young Austrian empress was obliged to wage war with many European countries, and in the many battles that were fought much of the severest fighting was done by those self-same Hungarians who had resisted Austrian despotism for so long.

Maria-Theresa did much for Hungary. The lowlands had been devastated during the Turkish rule, and now these were being colonised by Germans and Slavs. The soil that had been lain waste was cultivated again, and peaceful occupation took the place of perpetual fighting. But, notwithstanding the good that resulted, changes came which were unfortunate for Hungary. Maria-Theresa understood the nature of her Hungarian nobles and won them over to Austrian habits and manners of life. The great nobles left their strongholds and flocked to the Court of Vienna, and there became more and more German, so that within a short time nothing but their names and great dominions in Hungary showed them to be Hungarians. Not so with the lesser nobility and county gentry. These held to their homes and ancient customs, and kept alive the Hungarian spirit in their people. Thanks to these and their descendants Hungarian freedom has been retained, although not before another great struggle with the house of Hapsburg.

In 1848 the spirit of freedom swept along the whole of Europe, and the Hungarians took to arms to defend

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their rights which were being threatened. They had a mighty leader in Lajos Kossuth, but they were eventually defeated near Világos by the Russians, who were the allies of Austria. Not long before Hungary had begun to develop the true Hungarian spirit, and this was mainly owing to the genius of Count Szécsényi, who did so much for his country in every way—by giving the people institutions that were most necessary for the spiritual development of the nation.

The defeat of the Hungarians in 1849 was followed by many sad scenes, and after the execution of the bravest who had fought for the rights and laws of Hungary peace was made. Until the year 1867, however, there was much unrest, and complete peace was only then obtained through the diplomacy and wonderful political tact of Hungary's greatest statesman, Ferencz Déák. Under her present ruler she enjoys again her national and political rights. The king, Francis-Joseph, was crowned with the crown of St. Stephen (without which no king is thought to be the legal King of Hungary); he swore to keep the Constitution, and acknowledged Hungary as a separate country, but to be ruled by the same monarch as Austria—a member of the house of Hapsburg—having her own Diet, with two houses—that of the Commons and that of the Lords.

# The Country and the Climate

## CHAPTER II

### THE COUNTRY AND THE CLIMATE

IT can be hardly wondered at that the Seven Dukes who led the Magyars into their present home decided to make a halt in this wonderful country and go no further. If at that time the rich pasture-land was tempting to the Magyars, who, with their wandering habits and their great quantity of horses and cattle, needed pasture-land above all, how much more precious is the land to-day, with its huge granaries and the finest wheat in Europe?

Hungary consists of Hungary proper, with Transylvania (which had independent rule at one time), Croatia and Slavonia (which have been added), and the town of Fiume on the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

The lowlands are exceedingly beautiful in the north-east and west, where the great mountain peaks rise into the clear blue sky or are hidden by big white clouds, but no beauty can be compared to the young green waving corn or the ripe ears when swaying gently in the breeze. One sees miles and miles of corn, with only a tree here and there to mark the distances, and one cannot help comparing the landscape to a green sea, for the wind makes long silky waves, which make the field appear to rise and fall like the ocean. In the heat of midday the mirage,

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or, as the Hungarians call it, “Délibáb,” appears and shows wonderful rivers, villages, cool green woods—all floating in the air. Sometimes one sees hundreds of white oxen and church towers, and, to make the picture still more confusing and wonderful, it is all seen upside down. This, the richest part of the country, is situated between the rivers Danube and Theiss, and runs right down to the borders of Servia. Two-thirds of Hungary consist of mountainous districts, but one-third has the richest soil in Europe.

Great rivers run through the heart of the country, giving it the fertility which is its great source of wealth. The great lowlands, or “Alföld,” as the Magyars call it, are surrounded by a chain of mountains whose heights are nearly equal to some Alpine districts. There are three principal mountain ranges—the Tátra, Mátra, and Fátra—and four principal rivers—the Danube, Theiss, Drave, and Save.

Hungary is called the land of the three mountains and four rivers, and the emblem of these form the chief feature in the coat-of-arms of the country.

The Carpathian range of mountains stretches from the north-west along the north and down the east, encircling the lowlands and sending forth rivers and streams to water the plains. These mountains are of a gigantic bulk and breadth; they are covered with fir and pine trees, and in the lower regions with oaks and many other kinds. The peaks of the high Tátra are about 9000 feet high, and, of course, are bare of any vegetation, being snow-covered even in summer-time. On the well-sheltered sides of these



A MOUNTAIN ROAD AMONG THE CARPATHIANS.  
THE PEASANT WOMAN HAS HER BABY IN A BASKET ON HER BACK  
WHILE ANOTHER CHILD WALKS BY HER SIDE

Edgar Degas



## The Country and the Climate

mountains numerous baths are to be found, and they abound in mineral waters. Another curious feature are the deep lakes called "Tengerszem" (Eyes of the Sea). According to folklore they are connected with the sea, and wonderful beings live in them. However, it is so far true that they are really of astonishing depth. The summer up in the Northern Carpathians is very short, the nights always cold, and there is plenty of rain to water the rich vegetation of the forests. Often even in the summer there are snowstorms and a very low temperature.

The North-Eastern Carpathians include a range of lower hills running down to the so-called Hegyalja, where the wonderful vine which produces the wine of Tokay is grown. The south-eastern range of the Carpathians divides the county of Máramaros from Erdély (Transsylvania). The main part of this country is mountainous and rugged, but here also there is wonderful scenery. Everything is still very wild in these parts of the land, and though mineral waters abound everywhere, the bathing-places are very primitive. Hungary has not realised yet what tremendous wealth lies in her wonderful healing mineral waters. As a nation she is anything but business-like; all her traditions lie in the fighting line, and many a year will pass before Hungary's sons will be good merchants or shrewd business men who are able to take advantage of the great gifts that Nature has been so lavish in giving her.

The only seaport the country possesses is Fiume, which was given to Hungary by Maria-Theresa, who

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wanted to give Hungary the chance of developing into a commercial nation. Besides the deep but small mountain lakes, there are several large ones ; amongst these the most important is the Balaton, which, although narrow, is about fifty miles long. Along its borders there are summer bathing-places, considered very healthy for children. Very good wine is produced here, as in most parts of Hungary which are hilly, but not situated too high up among the mountains. The lake of Balaton is renowned for a splendid kind of freshwater fish, the Fogas. It is considered the best fish after trout—some even prefer it—and it grows to a good size.

The chief river of Hungary is the Danube, and the whole of Hungary is included in its basin. It runs through the heart of the country, forming many islands ; the greatest is called the Csallóköz, and has over a hundred villages on it. One of the prettiest and most cultivated of the islands is St. Margaret's Isle, near Budapest, which has latterly been joined to the mainland by a bridge. Some years ago only steamers conveyed the visitors to it ; these still exist, but now carriages can drive on to the island too. It is a beautiful park, where the people of Budapest seek the shade of the splendid old trees. Hot sulphur springs are to be found on the island, and there is a bath for the use of visitors. The Danube leaves Hungary at Orsova, and passes through the so-called Iron Gates. The scenery is very beautiful and wild in that part, and there are many points where it is exceedingly picturesque, especially between Vienna

## The Country and the Climate

and Budapest. It is navigable for steamships, and so is the next largest river, the Theiss. This river begins its course in the South-Eastern Carpathians, right up among the snow-peaks, amidst wild and beautiful scenery, and it eventually empties its waters into the Danube at Titel. The three largest rivers of Hungary feed the Danube, and by that means reach the Black Sea.

Hungary lies under the so-called temperate zone, but there does not seem much temperance in the climate when we think of the terrible, almost Siberian winters that come often enough and the heat waves occasioning frequent droughts in the lowlands. The summer is short in the Carpathians; usually in the months of August and September the weather is the most settled. June and July are often rainy—sometimes snowstorms cause the barometer to fall tremendously. In the mountain districts there is a great difference between the temperature of the daytime and that of the night. All those who go to the Carpathians do well to take winter and Alpine clothing with them. The winter in the mountains is perhaps the most exhilarating, as plenty of winter sport goes on. The air is very cold, but the sun has great strength in sheltered corners, enabling even delicate people to spend the winter there. In the lowlands the summer is exceedingly hot, but frequent storms, which cool the air for some days, make the heat bearable. Now and then there have been summers when in some parts of Hungary rain has not fallen for many weeks—even months. The winter, too, even in

## A Peep at Hungary

the more temperate parts, is often severe and long, there being often from eight to ten weeks of skating, although the last few years have been abnormally mild. In the valleys of the Carpathians potatoes, barley, oats, and cabbages are grown, whilst in the warmer south wheat, maize, tobacco, turnips, and the vine are cultivated. Down by the Adriatic Sea the climate is much warmer, but Hungary, as already mentioned, has only the town of Fiume of her own to boast of. The visitors who look for a temperate winter and want to get away from the raw cold must go to the Austrian town of Abbazia, which is reached in half an hour by steamboat, and is called the Austrian Riviera. Those who visit Hungary should come in spring—about May—and spend some weeks in the capital, the lowlands and hilly districts, and go north to the mountains and bathing-places in the summer months.

Tokay produces some of the finest wine in the world, and the vintage time in that part of the country is most interesting and picturesque.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PEOPLE

NOTHING is more difficult than to describe the exact type of the Magyar race. In fact, there is no exact type, the Magyars of the present period being a

## The People

conglomeration of all the numerous tribes that came into the land at the time of the wars of the “Home-making.” Several types exist, but which is the true Magyar it would be difficult to say. If there was a clue to this, it would be known with absolute surety whether the Hungarians were descended from the Fin-Ugor or Turko-Tartaric races. Among the different types there is the somewhat round head, very broad cheek-bones, and square jaw of the Mongol type—mostly to be found in the southern and midland districts—called purely Hungarian. Then, again, there are other types which have a resemblance to the Kirgiz living in Asia to this day. The majority are not tall, rather under middle height—especially in the working classes. They are very broad in the chest, square shouldered, long of body, short of limb, very active, with sinews of steel—the true horsy race, the greater part of their life having been spent on horse-back in olden times. The language is a mixture of the Turko-Tartaric and Fin-Ugor, but much changed by time. They are seldom very dark, brown from the lightest shade to the darkest being the prevailing colour, with dark or brown eyes; but blue eyes are often to be seen. Red, yellow, or flaxen hair is not a Hungarian type. A fighting nation *par excellence*, who, through circumstances, had to give up war, sought and seek to fight in other ways; the great predisposition for duels even at the present day has its origin in the ever-existing and only half-dormant desire to fight. The fame of the Hungarian Huszar spread all over Europe, and it was after the Hungarian

## A Peep at Hungary

pattern that other nations formed their mounted forces called the Huzzars.

The temperament of the Magyar is a peculiar mixture of quiet, logical philosophy, with sudden outbursts of uncontrollable excitement and fury. He has a strong vein of humour, is never offended when teased in fun, and has an ever-ready tongue to respond with. But woe to the person who offends the Hungarian in any matter relating to his family pride or honour. His anger and excitement easily gives way to peace again, and it is not in his temperament to nurse ill-will and thoughts of revenge. But when excited he will stop at nothing, and deems himself to be a demi-god of strength. Before the disastrous battle of Mohács was fought, the noblemen are said to have sworn that they would destroy the Turkish army with their signet-rings. The peasant lad, when out for a fête day, which includes fighting at the end, will say, "My stick I don't need; I can use my enemy's," implying that he could take it by force from the owner and give him a hiding with his own stick. On the other hand, they are most phlegmatic and conservative in many ways. They were so especially in matters of religion. After embracing the Roman Catholic creed, they clung to it through thick and thin. When the wars of the Reformation were fought in Germany and elsewhere, many followers of Luther came over to help to spread the new religion in Hungary. Although the people were overtaxed and impoverished by the great Popish potentates and dominions, the greater part kept to Roman Catholicism,

## The People

only a part of the midland counties taking up the teachings of Calvin. Now these lowland Hungarians who took to Protestantism have clung to it through many hardships. For many years they were harassed in every way, losing all their rights, and to this very day the Protestant clergyman is the poorest and most suffering individual in the whole Hungarian community.

To the psychical qualities above named we must add that of melancholy. The Hungarian is melancholy in his political aspirations, his infinite but always sad love of his country, his love of mournful ballads and folklore songs. There is a saying that "the Hungarian enjoys life with weeping eyes." Family life is considered the basis of all well-being. Perhaps no other language has such a variety of expressions, which give a distinct form of honour and obedience to a member of the family holding a higher position by right of age to the others. Children never address their parents by the customary "thou." The younger sister or brother never calls the older by that term, but there is a distinctive term for it, expressing extra homage to the elder one, and so on ; these distinctions exist in every other family grade of relationship. The word wife ("Feleség") expresses that she is the owner of half her husband's property, and is his "better half," as it is sometimes expressed. All acts of immorality were severely punished, and even now that the old cruel laws have been abolished, all bad characters have to leave their villages and go up to the cities ; this is not so with the Slavs and

## A Peep at Hungary

Rumanians—they are much more lax in their morals. The wife has great power in the household, but usually deserves it, being hard-working, thrifty, and a good wife and mother in most cases. The greatest ambition of the Hungarian housewife lies in her kitchen. It is a well-known fact that Hungarian cooking is almost a matter of art. This does not concentrate itself purely to the well-to-do classes, but is practised by all the lowland peasants—in fact, in all parts of Hungary where the people have a fairly good chance of earning their living. The Hungarian peasant is anything but frugal. Numerous are the dishes his simple wife can make—all kinds of stews and roasted meats, soups and greens, and quite an astounding lot of pasties. No wonder when the Hungarian peasant goes out to America he misses his good food above all things. The chief articles of food are mutton and pork, but also beef; the former the well-to-do peasant gets from his own herd. Poultry is only killed on special occasions—weddings, funeral feasts, or on the great holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and on one more occasion, as a humorous saying goes, “When the fowl or the peasant is ill.” The numerous green dishes are all prepared with rich cream sauces, and plenty of smoked sausages. Eggs and butter are in everyday use, and sweet pasties on Sundays or other holy days.

Every district has a speciality in the way of bread-baking and forming small bread rings, and many such little things. On bread-baking day the housewife is up nearly the whole night, and bakes the bread in her





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A YOUNG MAGYAR CSIGÓ ON THE GREAT PUZSTA, OR DESOLATE PLAIN OF HORTOBÁGY.

## The People

own baking-house. This is a little circular mound, built of clay and bricks, sometimes attached to the fireplace, but more often to be found in a separate building in the yard. The inside is heated first with wood and then with straw, the ashes are removed, and the bread put into this furnace. All sorts of little flat breads and buns are made, which are eaten buttered and hot. It must be owned that the Hungarian cooking is good but indigestible for foreigners, being very rich, but the hard-working peasant or workman seems to thrive on it well enough.

In looks the Slavs differ greatly from the Hungarians. The Slovak of the north is quite fair—the little children, in fact, are of a nondescript colour which is almost colourless. The complexion is much fairer, the eyes almost invariably blue, and they are much taller and thinner. They have well-cut features and almost Roman profiles. The Slovak of the western and midland counties is shorter and has flat, ugly features and much less intelligence of expression. They are soft of speech, but a cunning race nevertheless, the majority are quite Hungarian in feeling, but the older ones do not talk that language. At the present day the children, however, now learn Hungarian in the schools. The Slovak is very poor. Living up in the high mountains, where there is little ground suitable for growing corn, his chief food consists of cabbages and potatoes, and the bread they eat is not made of wheat, but barley. These poor people are heavily taxed by the Government, and the soil being poor also, it is a hard life for them. Indeed,

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this is the chief reason for the great emigration to America. There are numerous villages where not a man can be found at home, some women and children and old people forming the only population, the working men being occupied far away in the American mines. They often come home after having made a little money; but, as time goes on, more and more families emigrate altogether, and depopulation is the result.

The wages of the working classes in the north are small; this makes matters worse. Perhaps affairs will alter for the better when all the mines are opened and worked, as is contemplated. The Slovak is a devout Catholic, and has plenty of opportunities of keeping the strict fasts his religion imposes upon him. The poorest and most miserable dwellers of Hungary are the Ruthens in the county of Máramaros, north-east of Hungary, near the Polish border. They live chiefly on maize—even their bread is made of it; indeed, they eat little else. They are totally demoralised by drinking spirits, and have allowed all their property to fall into the hands of the Polish Jews, who sap the little remaining strength they have left. They live up in the mountain valleys and passes, and are the most squalid and dirty set of people one can imagine. They belong mainly to the Greek-Catholic and Russian Churches.

In Transylvania, besides the Hungarians there are many Rumanians—Oláh, as they are called in Hungary. Tall and dark-eyed, with coal-black hair, wild, rugged features, having a silent, stealthy tread,

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they are the counterpart of their equally dark and rugged mountains and impenetrable forests. While they are not bad people on the whole, hard life amidst adverse circumstances has left its mark on their character. Their great weakness is thirst for revenge if they think themselves wronged. There is a terrible instance of their moral failing in the inhuman massacre of women and children, the burning of many villages and noblemen's houses during the last peasant rising in Erdély (Transylvania). Serfs and vassals rebelled against the landowners and murdered them after putting them, in some instances, to frightful torture.

The Rumanians are frugal, their chief nourishment being maize and the food prepared from the milk of their sheep. Their occupation is chiefly to tend their sheep and to work in the forests, felling trees. They live in villages miles apart from one another, and are for the most part unable to read or write. Croatia and Slavonia, though joined to Hungary, form a distinct country, so we will not speak of them now. There are still the Bulgarians and Slavonians living to the south. Many of them live on Hungarian territory, and the Bulgarians, by extraction, are the people who, perhaps, are the nearest blood-relations to the Hungarians. They are taller, swarthy of aspect, and speak one of the many Slavonic languages current in Hungary. Living in the rich part of the country, they know the meaning of the word "plenty," their chief occupation being gardening and the buying and selling of cattle. The Slavonians, too, are a mixed southern Slavonic race, and their

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habits and manners of life are similar to those of the Bulgarians. Besides the Slavonic races there are several German peoples living in Hungary, who came into the country at different periods. Many came in during the wars of the Reformation in Germany and settled in different parts of Hungary, forming quite a separate community and laying the basis of several German towns, mostly in Transylvania and the Northern Carpathians. In these towns nothing but German was spoken until the opening of the Hungarian State schools that have compulsory Hungarian teaching. The Germans living in Transylvania are the “Sachsens,” and the others distributed all over Hungary are mostly “Swabians.” Under the reign of Maria-Theresa many Germans were brought into the country, to colonise the vast depopulated districts that had gone to waste since the terrible battle of Mohács and the subsequent rule of the Turks. Near Budapest, too, we find many German villages, the inhabitants of which are Swabians. Though living for some hundred years in Hungary, they have kept all their German habits. The Germans differ greatly from the Hungarians in every way. In looks they are fair, in movement much heavier and more deliberate. They are cunning enough in business, but on the whole are of a slower turn of mind. It is owing to the great tolerance of the Hungarians that all these Slavonic nationalities and Germans have not been effectually Hungarianised throughout the many centuries that they have lived together, but it is also owing to the hereditary horror and dread the

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Hungarian has of mixing with any other race that the different nationalities living together have kept their several characteristics.

### CHAPTER IV

#### DRESS AND CUSTOMS

Not so many years ago, before the great flood of cheap German and Austrian clothing material was poured into Hungary, the people dressed in linen they wove and spun themselves. Their clothes were made from the sheep skin or of a sort of felt material ; in fact, every portion of their dress was a piece of home product, and they had plenty of opportunities of showing their skill and excellent taste in all the beautiful leather-work, lace, embroidery, and very finely woven linen. Those who are interested may see real works of art, made by the simplest peasant, in the museums of Hungary. Many districts have given up the national dress, or have only partly retained it, mixing it with cheaper and less artistic materials that are especially made to suit the peasant taste. But if we look at these factory wares and compare them with the original home-made materials, we must own that it is a great pity that the home-made stuffs and national dress are dying out slowly but surely. Although many districts have partly or wholly given up wearing the national costumes, the majority of the

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people still cling to the old fashions. In no way can the factory replace all the individual skill and taste brought into play by the women of the peasant classes.

As soon as a baby-girl is born, the mother begins spinning and weaving the future marriage outfit the daughter will get. And as soon as the baby has grown to be a little girl she is taught to stitch and seam, spin and weave her own marriage portion. The Hungarian women in some districts even now spin the finest thread and weave it into such thin linen that it is almost transparent, and there is a certain kind which is rather crinkled like crape. Every girl has to work at her own bridal veil, and also make the lace of the little cap that she has to wear when married. These are chiefly done by needle on net. Bodices and petticoats are all richly embroidered, also the front of the low-necked chemise and the short puffed sleeves. The bodices are often worked with the finest gold thread and many coloured silks. The leather winter coats are also embroidered with coloured crewels and punched leather patterns. The most wonderful part of the matter is that all the women work according to their own taste, without using patterns of any kind. They make their own designs when working and from memory, using as models the flowers of the woods and fields and the leaves and fruits of trees; it is never an exact copy of the thing seen in Nature, but transformed into a new living idea, each woman working according to her own ability and taste. Flowers get fantastic shapes and leaves are moulded

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into definite types, and all these forms are combined and made richer—one might say blended—by arabesques of all kinds. While the women work chiefly in linen and lace, the men busy themselves in making the fine soft red leather top-boots for the women and strong, heavier ones for themselves. It is the fashion to put a piece of iron at the bottom of the high heels of these boots, so that they should clink in walking. Then they make the leather coats lined with sheepskin and ornamented with many colours of punched leather. The boots and coats are made by men called Hungarian tailors or Hungarian bootmakers, to make a distinction between them and the other workmen in those trades. Almost every peasant loves to carve wood, make his own coloured tobacco pouches, toys for his children, and headstones in the cemetery, which are carved in wood. Each district has its own dress, which bears resemblance to that worn in another part, but which also has some distinctive feature. The favourite colour of the Hungarian woman is white, and in some of the real Hungarian districts pure white is the reigning colour, only the little tight, short, sleeveless bodice reaching to the waist is made of coloured silk or velvet, richly embroidered. There are other districts, again, where multi-coloured dresses are worn, making the women look like great flaming exotic flowers. They wear a low-necked chemise, gathered into many folds at the shoulder, with wide sleeves reaching to the elbow, and there it is tied tightly to the arm with coloured ribbons.

The skirts are many, wide, and short. There are

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places where ten skirts are worn, one over the other, each about ten yards in width, drawn into artistic tiny folds at the waist and reaching down to the knee. At one time the soft red leather top-boot was the only form of footgear worn ; now in many places it has been changed for the little velvet or coloured leather slipper, and stockings are worn with it. To have a well-shaped leg is thought to be a great mark of beauty. The hands and feet even of the peasant women are well shaped and small, with slim wrists and ankles. On weekdays the women and men go barefooted, unless they go into the town. In that case they carry their boots on their backs, and only put them on just before reaching their destination. It is the custom in some parts of the country to take the boots off before entering the churches. The women have a peculiar walk, as it is thought very stylish if you can make your ten skirts swing and sway by the movement of the hips. A little apron must always be worn—of lace or silk on Sundays, and of simpler materials for working days. Then there are different ways of hairdressing, the one type being, for girls, the long hanging plait, into which wide coloured ribbands are plaited and allowed to fall to the bottom of the short skirt. The hair is parted in the middle and smoothed to the head, whilst unmarried women wear the so-called “Parta” on festive occasions ; this is an artistic arrangement woven of gold and silk, ornamented elaborately with beads, and is taken off after marriage.

When going to church the women wear silk shawls



A PEASANT CHILD WITH A FOWL, IN THE MOUNTAINOUS DISTRICT  
OF TÁTRA IN SOUTHEASTERN HUNGARY



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—mostly coloured ones—and in places where the people are especially wealthy the women put on three or four, one on top of the other, arranged in such a manner that in front, over the chest, one sees the multi-coloured stripes and again at the back where the ends hang down. These shawls have usually long, heavy silk fringes. Ear-rings are not, or at least were not, usually worn by the peasants, as in most districts the hair is combed over the ear and, in some places, pinned into two little rolls just hiding it; but on their necks they wear from eight to ten rows of coloured glass beads, and the Catholics all kinds of gold or silver amulets. The dress of the Hungarian peasant woman may seem peculiar to the foreign eye, but it is well adapted to the circumstances of life that she lives in.

The colour of the men's dress is also white—that is, the part worn on work-days in summer. On Sundays and in cold weather they wear tight cloth trousers, with top-boots reaching to the knee, waistcoat and jacket of the same material, much braided and full of silver buttons. In summer they wear a white shirt cut low at the throat and held together by a silk or linen scarf, the sleeves very wide; a short waistcoat, often made of coloured leather and finely embroidered; a pair of trousers reaching to the knee and having many yards of stuff in them give them the appearance of skirts; a leather belt, in which the tobacco pouch and other necessaries are kept; and over this a cloak woven of sheep's wool, elaborately embroidered in one or more colours, with rich arab-

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esques of punched leather. These cloaks are always worn thrown over one shoulder. These articles of clothing are often quite works of art, full of original ideas and designs, and cost a good deal. For winter wear there is the "Suba," which is a great round cloak made of sheepskin, sometimes worn with the wool inside, sometimes turned inside out. It is mostly of a dirty white colour, but often brown or black, also ornamented with red leather. No wonder when foreigners see the peasants in their winter dress—peaked black sheepskin caps and cloaks—that they believe them to be half barbarians. But the Hungarian climate, with its sudden and great differences of temperature, make this piece of clothing absolutely indispensable. The herdsman in the lowlands or in the mountains has no other bedclothes or covering; one might say it is his house which he carries about with him, like the snail. It is waterproof and an absolute protection from wet, hailstorms, and, in the great heat, from the sun.

The dress of the women goes through many changes from the time of her girlhood until old age. As a girl and young married woman she wears the finest transparent linen and light colours; these always get darker with age. The light silk shawls, too, are exchanged for brown and black, the lighter things being passed on to the younger generation. Even among the Hungarians themselves there are many distinct types in the dress. Then there are all the Slavonic tribes to be thought of. The Slovak dress has perhaps the greatest resemblance to the Hungarian,

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but it is yet different. The Slovak seldom wears the wide shirt; his part of the country is colder, so he covers his legs in tight, thick cloth trousers, wears heavy top-boots, but more often a primitive leather shoe, with strips of cloth or leather wound round the leg, something like the modern puttee. The woman's dress resembles that of the Hungarian, but it is less picturesque, heavier in every way, the bodice covering the hips and with long sleeves to it. But then these women have not the grace and vivacity or the beauty of the Hungarians. The Rumanian women wear a long chemise and a red or multi-coloured striped apron, often interwoven with gold. One is put on in front, the other at the back; in walking the chemise is seen at either side. They love trinkets, jewellery, and particularly a chain of gold coins, one may often find rare and ancient examples of Roman coins in a family necklace. The Rumanian woman, when young, has great beauty, but she is often withered at thirty: the habit of using "rouge" for the cheeks helps to spoil the complexion in a short time. A chemist who had only just gone to a Rumanian district asked a young girl why she used "rouge." "Why, the villagers will think I have not a penny for paint," was the answer. "Rouge" is just as much a part of their dress as any other article of clothing.

The Germans living in Hungary dress mostly in dark blue prints, also wear their skirts wide, with long-sleeved, very tight bodices, flattening the chest almost to a deformity. They are not picturesque, their German has a harsh guttural sound, and their

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brass bands are intolerable. But, like all the other nationalities living in Hungary, they, too, do fine needlework—especially beautifully embroidered bed things and head shawls. The babies of the Hungarians and all the other nations living in Hungary are pressed into pillows with tight swaddling clothes, with their little arms and legs pinned down in the most uncomfortable manner; as soon as they can toddle they are dressed exactly like their parents, and are the funniest little things to look at imaginable.

The peasant's life passes away in hard work—especially in the summer, when he has to provide for all the wants of the family during winter, because, being an agricultural people, there is not much to be done in the winter months—at least, not for the field labourer. It is only natural, then, that they use the few opportunities afforded to them for having a good time. For example, on Sundays they have better meals and dance after church hours. The looser portion of the community go to drink their wine and play at cards in the “Csárda” (village inn). The young people dance to the tunes of the gipsy musicians, whilst the old people, with the children, sit outside on the benches in front of the cottages. On the chief holidays there is always great feasting going on, usually a lot of the people get the “Hungarian illness,” as it is called: this is a bad form of indigestion. Naturally all great family events are celebrated with much outward show of rejoicing, feasting, and dancing. On such occasions the older women related to the family and enjoying the reputation of being good

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cooks are asked to help in the preparation of the feast. Weddings are, of course, of the greatest importance, and there are just as many ways of keeping them as there are differences in the many districts in the national costume worn at the time. Although the Hungarian nation is known to be a very poetical one, and the songs of the country are mostly love songs, yet marriage is a very serious affair—mostly arranged by the elder female members of the family. Great stress is laid upon the fact that the young people should be of exactly the same social degree, a landowner's son is not allowed to marry a labourer's daughter, although they are both peasants, the only difference being that the rich man works his own farm, whilst the other is paid for his work.

The peasants living in their villages will never dream of taking a partner from another village, and it has often been noted that, generation after generation, they marry a girl living in the same street or immediate neighbourhood, this going so far that, when a young fellow is found courting a girl in some other street of the village, the young men of that street will beat him, or even treat him more harshly. Courtship usually goes on over the garden fence, or with the girl standing at the window or door of the cottage, whilst the young man is in the street before the door or under the window, and after church they walk together. If it is not a suitable match, the older women of the families do all they can to stop it, and usually the young people give way in the end and marry those allotted to them by their elders. Of course there are plenty of

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sad songs sung in those times, and tragedies happen often enough. After the old women have settled the matter among themselves, and have ascertained what the marriage portion will be, the suitor asks two of his male relatives to go to the girl's parents and ask her hand. This is all done with stately ceremony. Dressed in their Sunday best, the men go to the girl's father, and are asked to step into the parlour. Here they receive wine and pastry, and, after a rather painful pause, they state the object of their errand. The father, according to old tradition, does not give his consent immediately, but makes many excuses—“the girl is too young,” “her mother cannot spare her,” and so on. But this is only to give the outward appearance of not wanting to get rid of his daughter. Both parties know it is only a sham show of reluctance, but the peasant etiquette is quite as formal and strict as any aristocratic etiquette can be. After money matters have been gone through, the men take leave and go back to their young friend's house ; and, having told him of their success, they immediately return with him to the girl's house. Here the young man repeats his wish to marry the girl, first to the father, and then the housewife is called in and the whole ceremonious asking is gone through with again. At last they call in the girl, and she is told that she is engaged. This is, of course, no news to her, but custom requires of her to ask “To whom ?” Then the young man asks her if she will marry him, and, after much ceremonious leave-taking, more wine and pastry being partaken of, he goes home, the date of the marriage

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ceremony having been fixed. Usually the engagements are not of long duration.

Most marriages take place during the carnival or after Easter; in fact, there were places and districts where all the marriages took place at that time. They marry at a surprisingly early age, often soon after the marriage the young husband goes to serve his compulsory three years as a soldier, and during that time hardly or never sees his wife.

Marriage being the only great event in the peasant's life, it is performed with due ceremony, the whole affair lasting two or three days amongst poor people, but a week, and even longer, amongst the rich ones. The longest marriage festival on record was that of the Bishop Thurzò; but that was in olden times. The wedding chamber and great dancing hall—a fine old building—still exist, and those visiting the Vág River district can see it in the small town of Nagy-Bitse. This wedding lasted throughout the whole year, the visitors leaving exactly a year after the marriage ceremony had taken place. Of course this is all very well for rich people, but the poorer classes are sometimes quite impoverished by the great marriage festivities and feasts that they have to give. In some parts of the country both families invite their own guests, and the great feasting after the ceremony in church goes on separately in each house. Only at the end of the third day do they pack the bride, her great marriage-chest (in which all her valuables are placed), all the cooking utensils, pigs, and calves up into a cart, the cows being tied behind, and so

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dash along the street to the new home. On the morning of the festival the bridegroom starts towards the girl's house between his best-man and another male relative, in front of them another young man walks who holds a staff, to which a large nosegay and coloured silk scarfs are tied. They go along with the gipsies playing behind, assemble at the girl's house, and then go off to church, the maiden crying bitterly, according to custom. A bride who does not cry is thought to behave very improperly. After the church ceremony bride and bridegroom return together, with the whole family and congregation trooping after them and the gipsies playing wild tunes in the rear. Then feasting and drinking begin, in each county according to its old customs. Calves, pigs, and fowl of every kind are cooked and baked in prodigious numbers ; pastries, sweetbreads, and fruit are served. The dinner being hardly ended, supper comes, and so on for some days, the intervals of feasting being spent in dancing and singing. How they can keep it up is, indeed, a wonder, and how the gipsies manage to play all the time is still more marvellous. If they try to snatch an hour or two of sleep, they are sure to be awakened by some riotous member of the party.

These customs only exist among the peasants at the present day ; but thirty or forty years ago they prevailed among the nobility too, the one difference being that more pomp and splendour were displayed, and the festivities were of longer duration. Not only weddings are the occasion of great feastings, but





PICTURESQUE COTTAGES IN TRANSYLVANIA.

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also the “name days” and christenings, and most peculiar are the funeral feasts. The latter are held after the funeral ceremony, when the mourners come back from the churchyard. These feasts start solemnly enough, all the great deeds and good qualities of the departed one being enumerated and much spoken of. But more often than not they become quite gay at the end. Tongues are loosened by wine, and one may hear of some of the lesser doings of the deceased.

Marriages, funeral feasts, and all other great occasions seldom end without a few broken bones. Fighting is the great closing event; it mostly begins in play, but often ends seriously enough. But those wanting to see a real “Csárdás” (national dance) performed by the people should go and look at a wedding. All the stately reserve of the Hungarian peasant has fled; he seems to exist for nothing else but dancing.

One great characteristic of the Hungarian, be he a nobleman or a peasant, is his great hospitality. He is never so happy as when his house is full of guests. This characteristic has been the ruin of the so-called well-to-do county families, because in the interminable feasting they naturally neglected their farming, and for several centuries always spent much more than they could afford; this is the cause of their decline and the reason why so many of the fine old homesteads have passed from their hands into those of the Jews, who, with their speculative talent, frugal life, and persevering qualities, became ever richer and,

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in the end, bought up the land for a mere song. The young Hungarian gentry spend months away from their homes, going from one hospitable house to the other, and then in return receiving their friends again for weeks and months at their own houses. To take the wheels from the coaches, or to drive the horses out into wild pasture-land, was the usual way of preventing the departure of the visitors. If you enter a simple peasant's house he will offer you his best eatables and be very offended if you refuse them. Among the rich and poor alike hospitality is considered an almost holy thing. Many are the foreigners who have taken back with them to their respective lands the memory of their kind Hungarian hosts, who are ready to do anything to make their guests enjoy life whilst in their company, and who hand them on from one friend to the other, thereby enabling strangers to obtain an insight into the life of the people.

The home of the peasant in the lowlands is a little straw-thatched cottage, built of unbaked bricks or of compressed earth. The so-called parlour has only one or, at the most, two small windows looking towards the street. In this room are kept all the valuables of the household, with the great painted and carved chest containing the housewife's property, which consists of linen, lace, embroidered garments, silk shawls, and trinkets. On the walls there are the pictures of the Virgin and Christ, and around these are placed the rosary and the twigs of palm that have been sprinkled with holy water at Easter time. In

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some parts of Hungary it is the custom to take all the eatables—lamb, coloured eggs, ham, bread, even water and wine—to the church in baskets to have them blessed and sprinkled with holy water. We then find in the room a large table and wooden chairs—often hand-painted, after the peasant fashion—and a bed with fine feather pillows reaching right up to the ceiling. The cottage is entered by a little door from the street, and this leads on to a narrow passage, which is sheltered from the rain. The first door leads into the kitchen, which has a great open fireplace in the middle, with a wide chimney coming straight down over one-half of the kitchen. In winter the pork, hams, and sausages are smoked there, and in some places cheeses also. On the walls of the front part of the kitchen hang brightly coloured plates, dishes, and jars, all of which are bought on the great market-days in the nearest town, and are made in Hungary from ancient patterns to this very day. To the right is the door leading into the best room, towards the left a door leading into the second and only room occupied by the family. The windows here look on to the poultry-yard, and close to it are the pigsty and stables, all snugly arranged, so that they are easily reached. In the room there is the family bed, the baby's crib, spinning-wheel, table, and chairs, and in the wall there are recesses, where the glass and china is kept. To some houses there is another smaller one attached, or even two, all having separate doors leading into the passage ; here the young married members of the family live. In front of the house there is often a

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patch of garden with gaily coloured flowers, to be worn on Sundays as a nosegay. In the windows there are flowerpots with quaint sweet-smelling, old-fashioned herbs. At the back of the yard there is sometimes the granary, and beyond that a patch of green grass with fruit trees. Here the children and the geese seem to have rare good times.

This type of farm is only one of several. In the north the Slovaks build their houses of great logs of wood and smear them on the inside with mud to keep the cold out. All houses are cleanly whitewashed before every great festivity and the more important holidays. The Rumanians living in the mountainous parts of Hungary or Transylvania also build their houses of logs, and to escape the snow they are built with an upper storey. In some parts of Transylvania the great gate and smaller door leading into the yard is of artistic wood-carving, painted with flowered patterns.

The well-to-do Germans live in stone houses in the north, but in the usual unbaked brick cottage in the south. The houses, in fact, are built after different designs, according to the climate of the county that they are built in. In the lowlands the villages are very few ; they lie far apart, and are generally very large, numbering several thousand souls. Out in the vast stretches of the corn-growing country or the great flat pasture-lands are the so-called "Tanyák." Early in springtime the peasant wanders out to these, and has to make shift with the most primitive life ; he stays there until it is autumn and time to drive

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the flocks and cattle home to the villages for winter shelter. The roads on these flat plains in the winter are scarcely passable. I shall never forget a drive to a station, which is twenty minutes in summer, lasting four hours, and that with the help of two horses, two oxen, and half a dozen men. The wheels sink and get stuck in the unfathomably deep mire and mud. This state of affairs is being improved by the opening of many new railway lines, which enable stone to be brought to these places, but the ground is so soft and greasy that it swallows up the millions spent on the roadways. In the hilly districts the roads are good, and there is always the highway leading from one town to the other which is in a state of fairly good repair.

The most wretched people of Hungary, the Ruthens, in the north-east, and some of the Rumanians too, live in miserable huts and hovels with only a single chamber, which serves as kitchen and living room, in winter the cow or donkey often being taken in as well for the sake of the additional warmth. The Ruthens are unspeakably dirty, and their poverty is indescribable. Half-naked, wretched children crawl out of the miserable huts to beg when a carriage passes. It is a sad sight to see their thin, emaciated little limbs and their bodies swollen by the heavy bread made of maize, which is almost their only nourishment. The Government has tried to mend matters, but only by very radical means could an improvement be attained. The first step would be to impose a severe fine on every Jew who sells

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spirits to the people. This, I believe, has been done; but what was done openly at one time is now carried on by stealth.

### CHAPTER V

#### SUPERSTITION AND FOLK WISDOM

THESE two things must have a most peculiar sound to English ears—more especially when put side by side. But, however tragi-comical it may seem, yet it is true that the wisdom of the people lies chiefly in superstition. Against this there seems to be no remedy. It is at its worst where the people are Roman Catholics, and more especially among the Slavonic races, and this, perhaps, because that religion is in itself full of mysticism. Many of the good priests work against superstition with all their power; in fact, the Romish Church considers it a great sin. And yet the people of Hungary, with all their bigotry and churchgoing, are one of the most superstitious people in Europe, being much on a level with the Russians. The learned classes try to bring the peasants round to reason, and, though the Hungarian peasant is most intelligent and is always philosophising in his simple way, one generation cannot alter that which has gone into the very blood of the people through the continual inheritance of many thousands of years. They

## Superstition and Folk Wisdom

have many superstitious beliefs in common with the wild nomadic Kirgiz of Central Asia of to-day, and the Hungarians have clung to these beliefs just as they have clung to some fashions in clothing and some pagan ceremonies transplanted into Christian soil, generation after generation. It would not matter so much if these ancient beliefs and habits were only ornamental in the way that old trinkets are ; but when it comes to discarding the doctor's advice and doctoring their children, wives, and themselves—not to speak of their cattle—with superstitious beliefs and quack mixtures, we see that very much harm must be done. In studying the different people and races of Europe, these superstitions are very interesting, and we can easily follow the line of descent of the people by their peculiar superstitions and folklore, to which the people cling more fanatically than to the Christian religion that they embraced more than a thousand years ago.

Several figures which repeatedly recur in their legendary stories are the fairies, dragons, witches, giants, and a great favourite is the “Garabonciás,” who is drawn as a youth of some learning, and flits hither and thither, and is always thin and hungry. If he departs blessing the house he has visited, all goes well ; but if he goes cursing those by whom he was not well fed, then the people absolutely believe that hailstorms and other misfortune will befall them if the “Garabonciás” so wills it. Then the people are in great fear of little children that are born with teeth. They believe them to be uncanny beings, who are

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under the spell of a wicked fairy and bring ill-luck to their family and the whole village.

Some folk sayings recur in all the nationalities living in Hungary ; others are typically Hungarian. It may be that many of these sayings have been imported into the different nationalities by the gipsies, who, with their roaming life and mysterious ways, have always had a strong hold upon the imaginative peasants living in Hungary. Of course we must keep in mind that the religion of the Hungarians who originally came into the country was Shammanism—they adored one supreme being called “Isten” ; but they did homage to all the natural powers about them, such as fire, water, wind, and earth. Although the people turned to Christianity, yet they retained all sorts of customs that are remnants of the old form of worship. In many parts of the country there still exists a kind of belief that the fire is a living thing, that has the power to be angry, to ask for offerings, to go here and there according to its will, and to avenge wrong done to it. “If the fire crackles or whistles, it is angry,” say the peasants, “and it wants something.” “If an angry man comes into the house, the fire grumbles at him.”

“When the fire burns abnormally,” they say, “throw salt or flour or a bit of food on it to appease its anger.” “Before leaving the house it is good to throw a bit of food into the fire to keep it quiet in its place, so that it should not climb on to the housetop.” Of course this means that it should not burn the house down. “At the time of bread-baking it is good to



YOUNG HUNGARIAN PEASANTS ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.



## Superstition and Folk Wisdom

throw a piece of the unbaked bread into the baking oven, so that the fire should not take to wandering.” “It is not good to spit into the fire, because it will be insulted and burn down the house over your head ; besides, the person so doing is sure to get a sore tongue.” There are special days when the fire requires extra care ; these are the days of St. Florian, St. Borbala, St. Anthony, and so on.

Then there are numerous ways of putting out a wrathful fire. “Milk a coal-black cow that has not a spot of white on it and sprinkle the milk over the burning place ; it will go out immediately.” Of course most of this advice is like the generally known brown-and-white spotted pony. If you see one and don’t think of its spots, you will get rich ; but of course the first thing you do is to think of the spots, so you never get rich—not in that way at least. It is just the same case with the coal-black cow. I doubt that there ever is one in a village, and the straw-thatched cottage will certainly be burnt to the ground before you can milk the cow, so that there is never any chance of trying this wonderful remedy.

After fire, perhaps water has the greatest power of captivating the phantasy of the people. “Such water is supposed to have the greatest healing power that has been fetched before the rising of the sun.” “It is always good to throw back a few drops of water drawn from a well, so that it should always give plenty.” “Before giving a person water to drink out of a jar, you must spill some on the ground.” This is to propitiate the evil spirit. “When crossing the

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water on a raft it is good to throw some bread into the water, to make sure of landing safely."

The following are a few of the current sayings and beliefs existing in the heart of the Hungarian counties: "If the cows run about whilst drinking, rain is to be expected." "If you see the lightning strike the ground, mark the place, and in seven years' time you will see it reappear from the earth." "Put a frog into a loaf of bread and it will not rain until the frog has eaten it up." "If there is a high wind, some one has hung himself." "If you see a star fall, don't point at it or show it to any one, because every time a star falls a soul leaves purgatory; but if you point it out, the soul must go back to its suffering." "When it thunders, the chariot of God passes along the heavens; the lightning is caused by the hoofs of the horses." "If you rub your neck with the skin of a lizard caught before the day of St. George, your throat will not be sore." "On St. Andrew's day the girls should pour lead, and then stand with their backs to the door and throw a slipper over their shoulder. If the slipper heel lies towards the girl, then she will marry in that year; if not—then not." "On the day following Good Friday the fruit trees should be shaken; then they will bear fruit abundantly." "If on New Year's morning a woman leaves her home and meets a man or a gipsy, she will be lucky all the year round." "On Christmas Eve the hostess should not get up from the supper-table during the meal, because if she does so her hens will not lay eggs in the spring." "If a dog howls,

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fire will break out in the village." "It is not good to mourn for the dead, because every tear shed wanders to the grave and lies heavily on the coffin." "If a cat washes itself, visitors may be expected."

These are typical of the many hundreds of sayings common among the peasants of Hungary. In connection with the superstition of the Hungarians, we must mention that among the Shammonite people there were always seers—that is, their priests in the olden times were for the most part men who, through a certain weakness of the nerves, were addicted to fits and trances, and at these times they prophesied. Naturally, if anything happened to come true it was passed on from generation to generation.

There are at present many so-called wise women in Hungary who are of an abnormal nervous disposition, and these people dream and prophesy, and are thought more of than any priest or sage in the village. In the Middle Ages these poor creatures were thought to be witches, and often suffered death at the stake, or were killed by being tied to the tail of a horse made to gallop round until the delinquent died. But even though these cruel times have passed, the so-called seers are still feared and respected, and if such a woman happens to live in a village, the people flock to the place from far and wide, bringing sick children, animals, and the tale of all sorts of misery and evil from their homes, in the fond hope that the wise woman will find a remedy for all.

# A Peep at Hungary

## CHAPTER VI

### FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS

THE most appropriate thing would be to write about the Hungarian children's fairy-tales, but I have never heard that any exist. Indeed, the country is full of tales of fiction and stories with some foundation, but there are none specially for children, or, at least, not any that could be recorded as being purely Hungarian. The child of the Hungarian peasant knows how to work as soon as it knows anything. It is quite the usual thing to see a baby of four taking care of and even carrying a yet smaller one. So the little girls are made to help their mothers, and the boys, as soon as they can toddle, are also made to be useful. Yet, in a way, all the stories of the grown-ups are also for the children, as the full-grown peasant is practically a child to the end of his days. Several of the tales current among the people have been made up into beautiful poems by the great poets of the Hungarians, such as János Arany, Mihály Vörösmarty, and Sándor Petöfi. There are two that are quite exceptionally good, and both verses speak of the times in Hungary when great deeds were done and the reigning kings were great men. The first is a poem telling of the deeds of Toldi, during the reign of Lajos the Great. Toldi was the strongest man of his age, who won love and honour by being repeatedly the winner

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of the great tournaments fought in those days. There is not much action in the story, but it is full of poetic beauty. The second is by Mihály Vörösmarty, and tells of an event that happened in the youth of Matthias Corvinus Hunyady. He goes to the chase, and, while dashing after the deer in the heart of the forest, he sees a beautiful young girl, who is chasing a butterfly. He immediately forgets the deer and begins, in his turn, chasing the girl. Just at the moment she gets her butterfly, he puts his arm round her and kisses her. She leads him into her father's house, not knowing he is the King. There he stays some time, enjoying in her company the beauties of the forest. But the King cannot tarry longer—matters of State hasten his departure. When he takes leave of beautiful Ilonka, he invites her to come to Buda, tells her and her father that they will be welcome at the Court of Matthias Hunyady, and he ends by saying that whenever they want him they will always find him at the Court of the King. Beautiful Ilonka, who has fallen in love with the gay and charming hunter, urges her father to take her to the Court of Matthias. They set out on their long journey, and arrive at the stronghold of Buda just when Matthias comes riding along the street, and everybody does homage to him. At that moment both father and daughter realise that their guest, the gay hunter of the forest, is no other than the King ! The old father leads his fainting daughter away, and they go back to their quiet forest home, without having been to see the King. In the autumn, when the leaves are falling

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and the birds of passage leaving, beautiful Ilonka also leaves her home, and is carried to her grave to rest under the great trees of the forest in which she loved to roam. This poem is not purely fiction ; it was founded on an old folk legend.

Many old sayings have been made into works of art by the great poets of the land, and yet it is best to hear them from the people themselves. In the stillness of a beautiful summer night, with a misty moon hanging sleepily overhead, I heard an old saying which speaks of the two streamlets up in the Carpathians. Sitting on the mossy rocks, shrouded in night's dark mantle, I was looking out at the water, dimly lit by the hazy light of the moon. The summer is short up in the mountains, lasting but two months ; but in the beautiful July night, when the gentle breeze wafts the fine scent of the forest flowers and wild strawberries, one cannot believe it is ever winter up there. Listening to the wonders of Nature, one hears more and more distinctly its voice. Everything that seemed quiet a little while ago is now a mighty murmur of millions of voices, accompanied by the voice of the brooks. Night birds hoot out into the dark forest their weird cry, rocks and trees sending back many echoes. The summer is short ! And the frost-bound days of sleep are long ! In the dreamy hum there is yet another sound—that of the flute. The rough little wooden pipe is a magic instrument in the hands of the peasant. All over Hungary, be it the poor Slovak of the north or the wild Hungarian herdsman of the south, they all use it alike. Yes, it is

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the one friend of their isolated life. The Magyar of the vast plains lives for months alone with his cattle, and it is the same with the Slovak up in his rugged mountains. The scenery is different: there broad plains, vast stretches of land, watered by great wide rivers; here snowclad mountains and huge fir forests! The flute cries out into the night the sad folk-songs of the Slav; in the south it is the Hungarian melody that is wafted through the air. The gipsies of the north and south hearken to them on summer nights and pick them up in a twinkling. Some days later a new melody is heard in the city and towns. Where did it come from? Who composed it? It will perhaps never be known. Perhaps the dark herdsman in the south sang out the story of his woe and love to the friendly dark of a summer night, or the fair-tressed Slovak of the north sings of the fairies and witches of the dark fir forests! I follow the sound of the flute, and see an old man seated on a huge felled fir tree. His tall form is bent forward as he gently handles his little flute. His eyes look dreamily towards the mountains that glitter in the moonlight. He is old and sings of his age. The words are almost foolish, so childish are they; but what pent-up feeling of sorrow lies in the melody. After a time he plays no more, but sits musing, and I go up to him. "Why out so late, uncle?" "Old men need no sleep; there will be plenty of it during eternity," is the answer. After a time he goes on talking of his own accord: "I love to sit here; it is a wonderful place. In my youth I saw the form of those that flow as

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rivulets before us. And now in my old age I would see them again. Listen," the old man said. "The tale is old—almost as old as the mountains—but in summer nights, at moontide, or in the howlings of the winter storm those that hear the ' Sounds ' and see the ' Sights ' are watching, and they hear and see the ' Wonders of Nature.' Thousands of years ago, when other nations lived in these parts and the forest was full of wild beasts, here in this valley, which lies now bathed in moonlight, lay the camp of a long-forgotten king. In the centre of the camp stood the tent of the king, and there lived his daughter, a girl of great beauty called Vágika. All was quiet in the camp, as only womenfolk were there, the men having gone to fight. The peace of the night is broken all of a sudden ; horns are sounded ; the king and men return from the wars. There is much rejoicing, because they had won the battle without much loss on their side. Among the prisoners taken is the king of another nation. The evening is spent in wild rejoicings, chanting of old war songs, and a great tournament is arranged. The son of the chief priest, a giant, is to fight the captive king ; the prize—freedom to the captive if he wins, or the hand of the beautiful Vágika to the son of the high priest if he is the victor.

"A short but terrible battle followed, in which the captive was smitten, dying on the spot. Vágika, seeing this, fell crying at her father's feet, begging him not to make her marry the high priest's son. In her anguish she told her father that, whilst they were away making war, she had given her heart to





Glen Steele

VILLAGERS RETURNING FROM CHURCH, ZEDUAR

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another. Wandering alone in the forest she lost her way, and a young prince of a neighbouring people had found her and brought her home. And they loved each other. The old king was very sad, because he loved his daughter more than all the world ; but a king's word cannot be broken. To give her time to live down her sorrow, he ordered that the marriage feast should not take place before twelve full months had passed away. At the twelfth moon, at the hour of night when all the people were asleep, Vágika, the still beautiful but pale daughter of the king, creeps out of her tent. With trembling limbs she stands and hearkens for a sound. The song of the nightingale is heard near by. She draws a small flute from her bosom and returns the call : this is the lover's signal. She glides into the wood, and there the lovers meet. It is their parting too, for on the morrow Vágika is to marry the high priest's son. The prince clasps her closely, but he feels her hold relax, and Vágika sinks back into his arms. She is dead ! Dead of a broken heart at parting from her love ! His pain is terrible, but at last he gives her his parting kiss and buries her beneath the moss. Then he rushes away, seeking revenge for his lost love. Down in the valley the marriage festival is being prepared. The maidens of Vágika take into her tent the marriage robes. Then it is that she is missed. At last they have to tell the king that Vágika has fled. The old man is smitten with remorse, and would give his all to have his child back. The son of the high priest, mad with anger, rushes into the forest, brandishing his

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huge weapon. And there, in the heart of the forest, the two men meet, both thirsting to revenge—the one his love, the other his bride. When the high priest's son sees the prince he is beside himself with fury, and asks him to give him back his bride. The prince on his part challenges him to fight, calling him murderer, and tells him that Vágika had died in his arms that night, not wanting to be the wife of one she did not love. At this moment the people in the valley heard a roar as of wild bulls ; the two men fell to killing each other. By the time the people rushed to the spot they only found two corpses. The young prince they buried under the green moss in the forest ; the high priest's son they bore away with them. Twelve moons passed again, and on the night of the full moon pearly drops of water oozed up from the grave of Vágika. At the same time, far-off in the forest, another grave began to shed its pearly tears—that of the buried prince. Drop after drop oozed out, forming a little brook as it went along. Many windings and turnings the two little streams made, until at last they met and joined into one. And then all at once that which was a longing murmur turns to the jubilant sound of victorious love ! The two had met in after-life, and were singing their song of love through eternity. And now look you," said the old peasant ; " see, there where the waters unite, where the foam and spray sparkle as myriads of dewdrops in the light of the waning moon, there I saw in my youth the figures of the maiden and a youth locked in each other's arms in the great, the everlasting love. They

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were as dancing spray, and yet I saw them, and the murmuring brook told me their sad story. You see, I lost my love here, when we were both young. Maybe the fairies will some day show me the face of my lost one. Well, well ! I need not wait much longer—my time has almost come.” And this is the legend of the Vág, the little stream up in the Carpathians which eventually winds its way into the waters of the Danube, and which bears the name of Vág—that is, Vágika. And thus wonderful stories come to life !

There are tales which, though highly imaginative, are founded at least on some truth. The following is the terrible story of Erzsébet Báthory : This woman, who was evidently mad, lived in a beautiful castle perched on the summit of a hill in the lesser Carpathians, and her memory still haunts the neighbouring villages. Her name is put down even in history, and many a yellow parchment proclaims her life of sin, shame, and horrible deeds. The once mighty castle of Csejte stands in ruins ; but, though nothing but owls, bats, and snakes inhabit its vast halls and chambers, many go to see the scene of so many horrors. The view from the terrace is indeed beautiful and well worth seeing. Below is the fertile valley of the Vág and the river itself flowing peacefully along. Across the other side of the river-bed we see the ruins of the castle Temetvény, also perched up on the summit of a rocky hill. This latter place has sad memories for the Hungarians. Here it was that the great Prince Rákóczi made his plans for the freedom

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of Hungary. It was an ominous place! “Temetvén” in Hungarian means burial-ground. Indeed, it was the burial-ground of all the hopes of freedom for the Hungarians at that time. Everywhere we turn we see the remains of castles on the peaks. Behind these severer and gloomier in aspect are the Greater Carpathians. But let us return to our story. It is said that Elisabeth Báthory fell in love with a youth younger than herself. She, the once most beautiful woman in the land, had turned forty. Time had begun to set its mark on her beautiful face. She had many consultations with quacks—old women of the villages—but none could help her; her great beauty was fading. However, love was still young in her heart! One day, whilst dressing, she struck the waiting-maid across the face so violently that the poor girl bled profusely. A drop fell unnoticed on the beautiful woman’s face and dried there. After some hours, perceiving it in the mirror, she washed it away. Then it was that she saw to her greatest wonder that where the skin had been covered with blood it had regained its purity and freshness. It is said that, whilst looking at her reflection in the mirror, her whole diabolical scheme for retaining her beauty was made. Conspiring with the castle warden and some old hags of the villages, she had all the beautiful girls of the neighbouring villages brought up to the castle. She thus attained two objects—the coveted blood of the youthful maidens, and the annihilation of all beauty far and wide that might rival her own. On bitter wintry days this terrible woman, clothed in sables

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and velvet, sat in her throne in the courtyard of the castle ; the poor girls were dragged into her presence, stripped of their clothing, and flogged until blood flowed profusely from their wounds. This blood she had collected in golden basins and used it as toilette water. Sometimes frenzy would overcome her, and nothing would appease her but the death of several girls, whose blood was poured into her marble bath, where she is said to have laughed and screamed, so that it was horrible to listen to her. Seven hundred girls are said to have perished in this dreadful manner. The people were her serfs and dared not do anything to thwart their mistress, although in every village there were many mourners by this time. One day a poor village priest asked to be admitted into the presence of the Governor of Hungary. The Governor, being told that it was a matter of conscience, ordered his people to let the priest in. Then the priest told his sad tale : "There are no marriages in our part of the world, because a fiend in the form of a beautiful woman destroys all the young girls." The Governor hardly believed the priest, but made up his mind to look into the matter. In those days it was a difficult thing to bring such an accusation against one of the great ones of the land, especially one that had many serfs and vassals and, in case of fighting, could thwart all plans to get at her if she knew of the coming attack. So the Governor made up his mind to take this woman unawares. He started with a number of gentlemen and soldiers, and posed as a wandering young chief who was in quest of a patron

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to whom he could offer his services in fighting. One day his bugle sounded before the castle, asking hospitality of the fair owner. This was granted, and the Governor was the guest of Elisabeth Báthory for some days. She taking him to be a wandering warrior, not much care was taken to conceal the dreadful doings in the castle. Before many days had passed the Governor saw that every word the priest had told him was true. The moans of the unfortunate ones who were locked in the underground dungeons could be heard as far as his rooms. Next morning he asked his hostess to show him over the castle, and she readily consented. When they were in the prisons, the Governor turned to his hostess and said, "I hear there are some other underground vaults under these prisons. I want to see them." "Yes, but you cannot; they are inhabited," was the answer. "Inhabited or not, I shall see them." "And pray who may you be that you dare to speak in this voice of command?" quoth the woman. "I am the Governor of Hungary, and you are my prisoner. I have heard of your wickedness. Soldiers, arrest this woman!" She was bound and dragged to the dreadful dungeons. Terrible sights met the eyes of the Governor. Young girls dead and dying were lying about. Elisabeth Báthory was dragged into a cell and walled up alive, and left to die the terrible death of hunger in the company of those she had ruthlessly murdered. Her lands were confiscated, but the memory of her terrible deeds still lives in the minds of the people. Of course, in those times there was no distinction between

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madness and wickedness. This unfortunate woman was certainly mad, and it was more the fault of the age she lived in that made it possible for her to harm so many and die such a terrible death herself.

## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE IN THE LOWLANDS AND MOUNTAINS

A THOUSAND years ago the Hungarians, when entering the country, were a fighting nation in the first instance, and, to suit their nomadic habits and life, breeders of animals, especially horses. The favourite occupation of the Hungarian to this day is being a shepherd, herdsman, or “Csikós” (those that tend the horses being called by that name). Field work and gardening have only taken root with time, this being occasioned by necessity. Fifty years ago great stretches of land were yet unbroken by the plough, and on these vast plains throughout all the summer the herdsman, shepherds, and “Csikós” lived in little straw huts, with the most primitive contrivance to drive their flocks and horses into in the time of a sudden storm. The beasts lived a semi-wild life out on those great plains and marshes. Some of these territories still exist, with the same primitive wild life going on, the greatest plain of the present time being the Hortobágy, near the town of Debreczen. As time goes on,

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more and more earth is being tilled, and agriculture and cattle-breeding is being modernised and the land more thoroughly worked than hitherto.

In former days the peasant only broke up as much of the earth as would enable him to live with his family and to hand over the compulsory tribute to his master. This was before the year of 1848, when they were still serfs and vassals. After the liberation of the peasantry more and more ground was worked, but still in a primitive way. There are, too, the great dominions of the aristocracy, the Roman Church, and the Government property. Of course these and many others are worked by machinery, with every modern invention ; but the little peasant still sows his grain by hand, cuts it in the same way as his forefathers, and thrashes the grain by making horses walk over it, or by using the old-fashioned flail.

The chief feature of the cattle in the lowlands of Hungary is that they are of a large, strong, bony build, and quite white, with very long horns stretching wide apart over the beast's forehead. This race was evidently brought into the land at the time of the "Home-making," and came originally from Asia or the Don district in Russia. It is most likely the same in the case of the long twisted-horned sheep of the real Hungarian breed, but these are dying out. They are very picturesque animals, their long, sharp, twisted horns sticking out in a straight line from their heads. In the time of Maria Theresa the Merino sheep were imported, and they form the chief breed





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now, mixed with another kind. The buffaloes that still exist in the north-eastern counties and Transylvania also belong to early times, having been brought into the land by the Hungarians, and evidently came originally from Asia. The sheep are of the greatest necessity to the Hungarian peasant, every article of their clothing being made from the sheepskin or wool, except the linen they wear. They live on the milk, cheese, and curds of these animals, and the flesh is their usual dish, prepared with "paprika" into a kind of stew called "gulyás." Every shepherd cooks his own meal—generally in the evening, after having seen to his flock.

The cattle on the lowlands are, as a rule, white and of the old Hungarian breed ; these are the swiftest workers in harness, and, not being dainty eaters, are easily reared and kept through the winter. The Hungarian bull is a great strong white beast, with dark, black rings round his eyes. It often happens that on the great plains two bulls fall to fighting. The herdsmen try to separate them, chasing them on horseback and lashing them with leather thongs which are strung with lead. But more often than not one or the other of the bulls gets badly wounded in the fight. In his anger and broken pride he escapes to the marshes, and is heard bellowing there for days. Sometimes they even perish there, because no man can approach a beaten bull, so great is his fury and frenzy when he sees a living being. The great difficulty in the lowlands is that, with the exception of the rivers which lie far apart, there is

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hardly any good water available, the wells dug into the soil often supplying bitter or salt water. Often the animals have to be driven many a weary mile before they reach sweet water. Perhaps one of the prettiest sights is the Csikós driving his herd of half-wild horses before him, swinging out his great Karikás (a short-handled, tremendously long-lashed whip), dashing along at a frantic pace in a whirlwind of dust on a summer's day. When he wants to catch a horse, he lassos it with the greatest skill, as these animals are so wild that they are not to be caught otherwise. Not so the favourite horses of the Csikós that he always rides; these are so tame that they will come to their master if they hear him whistle in the low tones they are used to.

The Hungarian nation evidently lived on horse-back for many hundreds of years during the time of the "folk-wandering," and have kept to the horse through every period. In wilder days it was on the back of their sturdy and fleet little horses that they knocked at the gates of Bisanz, and on these they wandered into many an unknown land, often robbing and coming back laden with spoil. These wild times are gone, and still the Hungarian Huszár is the best rider on the whole Continent. But no wonder! From earliest youth they sit their spirited little steeds without a saddle, and have been known to pick up children who were in the way while tearing along at the maddest pace.

Many romantic stories are interwoven into the

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lives of the shepherds and Csikós. Not so many years ago young men who wanted to escape the compulsory military service, or who happened to have killed some one in a brawl, to escape the Zsandár (police) used to take flight into the great marshes, woods, or vast plains, and there turn into robbers, the shepherds, herdsmen, and innkeepers always helping them and giving them notice in good time of the approach of the much-hated Government Zsandár. The Szegény legény (poor boys, as they were called) lived their life of solitude in the wood and marshes under secure cover in the daytime. At night, when there was a cloudy sky, they lay in wait and robbed the citizens who went by on their loaded carts to the neighbouring market. This isolated life, and always being hunted like animals, made them cruel. Sometimes their whole life was spent in this way, having no other companions but the shepherds, and only very rarely daring to approach the habitations of people. Yet they yearned with an aching heart for their homes in the little village, with its great rows of acacias, where the fragrance is sweet and heavy on summer nights, and where the warbling of the nightingale turns night into one of the sweetest concerts of Nature. Yes, they yearned with all their hearts for the little garden with the great flaming flowers, where their sweethearts waited for them when the stars were shining brightly in the vast blue of the heavens. They longed for the old sweet days ! But sad was often their fate ! Sometimes they were caught when in the act of nearing a

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village, or when drinking in the Csárda (inn) of the “Puszta,” although the host always held with them, just as most of the peasants did. Nevertheless, sometimes a cunning Zsandár managed to get hold of one of the “poor boys”; then, of course, imprisonment for life or the gallows followed. But they never gave up their lives cheaply. Many more were the Zsandárs that died by the Betyár (robber) bullet than Betyár caught by the Zsandár. If taken, they seldom lived long in prison, the pent-up life soon killing those used to absolute freedom. Sándor Petöfi, the great Hungarian poet, wrote many a beautiful verse and ballad about the Betyár romance. This type is almost extinct at the present time. Against the well-organised police they cannot hold their own, and if it is a case of their escaping to the marshes, the delinquents are caught within a few days or weeks.

We have already mentioned that Hungary is the best wheat-growing country in Europe. The Hungarian field labourer is not able to reap all the grain grown on the lowlands, and the landowners have to bring the poor Slovak of the north to help in the gathering-in of the harvest. But the Hungarian workman, who is well fed throughout the whole year and enjoys perfect health, is worth two of the northern Slovak in work, although the latter is the taller of the two. The labourer of the lowlands works sixteen to eighteen hours a day during harvest-time, on moonlight nights the work hardly ceasing for more than a few hours. Their womenfolk are out, too, and help

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in the work. After such hard days of labour one hears them entering the villages singing their merry harvest tunes. Of course, like all things, the harvest ends with a great feast given by the landowner. The workmen make a pretty kind of basket or crown, made of the yellow straw and interwoven with coloured ribbons, which is taken up to the castle or home-stead on the last night of the harvest and hung up in the hall, after which event, both the leading labourer and master having made a speech, the great harvest festivities and dancing begin.

The original Hungarian breed of horses were not thoroughbred horses, but descendants of that wonderfully strenuous and hardy race of horses the Hungarians had brought with them from Asia. Since the eighteenth century this breed has been improved by mixing it with Arab and English thoroughbreds. Mezőhegyes and Bábolna are the two greatest Government horse-breeding places (stud) well worth visiting. The Hungarian half-bred Arab is small, very swift, with splendid legs, and is the hardiest little animal one can imagine. Nature forces the Carpathian districts and the mountainous regions of Transylvania purely to be given to the breeding of cattle and sheep. In the Carpathians, excepting a few instances, all goes on in the most primitive way. It is not much better among the Rumanians in Transylvania. The people are too ignorant to be able to make use of all the advantages Nature offers them. It is true that in the early spring the owners of the herds and their families leave their villages and

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go to live in the wilds of the snow-peaked mountains, and although no labour is spared, the final result is not what it should be, because modern ideas are put on one side and old traditions clung to.

### CHAPTER VIII

#### THE SCHOOLS

To begin with we must mention the fact that much has been and is being done to better matters as regards schooling, but perhaps not altogether with practical methods. On paper everything is in the greatest order, but those that have visited the mountainous districts of Hungary will see at the first glance that the children cannot get any schooling unless there is one school in each village, be it of the simplest kind. The law requires it to be so, but the payment allotted to the teachers is so small that they can hardly exist on it. Besides, the Government is not able to keep pace with the sudden development of Hungary and its absolute want of schools. Added to this, in most places (speaking of the wilder regions) there is not even a schoolhouse or a decent cottage for the teacher to live in. The villages lie far apart and are approached by impossible roads, and the snow is yards deep in the winter. Naturally those children that live in villages where there is no school are kept at home

## The Schools

all the winter ; in summer, again, they have to work in the fields and help in tending the cattle, and so on. Naturally there are more unlettered people in Hungary than perhaps in any other country in Europe. In the cities the schools are of the best kind, a Hungarian youth having to learn about three times as much as an English boy, considering that, in most cases, there are two compulsory languages—Hungarian and German—and besides these two dead languages—Greek and Latin—to be learned. The schools in the towns and cities of Hungary are model schools, and the masters of the very highest order—intelligent, learned men and women. But this is not enough. The country people as well ought to be taught at least to read and write and to understand the simple arithmetic they are in need of. As things are now, one cannot expect the ignorant peasant to take up modern ideas in farming. There are agricultural schools and institutions, but these are hardly attainable for the poor wretched peasant who has not learned his A B C. In the lowlands matters are better, but also bad enough, because of the great distances. Scholastic affairs are best in the counties to the west, north-west, and some parts of the north, and, of course, near the towns. Much of the teaching has been carried on from olden times by the “Piarists”—a community of Catholic priests—but the majority of the schools are in the hands of the Government, and it is to the Government that Hungary looks to give the people of Hungary enough schools to make all the nationalities living in the land a useful and a thinking people. There are

## A Peep at Hungary

three universities in all ; a fourth will be soon opened. One is in Budapest, the present capital of Hungary ; one in Pozsony, the old capital ; and the third in Kolozsvár, the former capital of Transylvania.

The middle classes, and more especially the aristocracy and gentry, have been a book-loving and learned people for some hundreds of years. The Hungarians used the Latin language for conversation until 1848, and only spoke Hungarian, Slavic, or German with their inferiors. Nowhere is so much stress laid upon the fact that children should learn foreign languages. But this all concentrates itself upon a very small portion of the people. The poor peasant in many parts has to get along as well as he can. The well-to-do children play all the games that are played in other countries, and the boys love athletics and are excellent swimmers and skaters as a rule. The peasant child has not much time for play, but a top or a whip or a wooden doll made by its father will amuse it sufficiently. A village cricket or football ground is unknown.

## CHAPTER IX

### WILD ANIMALS AND BIRDS : SHOOTING AND FISHING

THERE are plenty of wild animals in Hungary. To find them we must again go up into the most remote parts of the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Alps.





AN OLD CUSTOM IN THE GREEK CHURCH AT DESZE  
RUMANIAN CHILDREN BRINGING WATER TO BE BLESSED.

## Wild Animals and Birds

As the greatest and most formidable wild beast, we must mention the bear in the first place. It is the largest of its kind, the great brown bear of Hungary. In former times they were much harassed, everybody doing his best to get rid of them ; but lately some of the wealthy landowners of the land have tried to stop the extermination of the bears by leaving them in comparative peace for several years running. Their home is in the North, North-Eastern, and Eastern Carpathians. They live in wild forests of hundreds of years' standing, roaming about in quest of honey in summer-time, and hiding themselves in rocky caverns for their winter sleep. In its normal state the bear of the Carpathians prefers wild fruit, honey, herbs, and sweet roots for its food ; but when forced by hunger it will attack sheep or even cattle, and in case of anger even man. The bear is not dangerous as a rule, but if hunted and driven out of his retreat he will attack human beings. Hungarians consider bear-hunting the greatest sport, and after that they like shooting the wild boar and stags the best. A bear-hunt is always very exciting, and many drivers have to take part in it. In Transylvania the Oláh (Rumanian) peasant is the most daring bear driver.

A certain portion of the forest will be taken, where they have recently seen one of these monsters. The men stand up in an angle and rush through the trees, making as much noise as they can. At the other end several "guns" are standing, waiting to see what will come towards them from the beaten forest. The bear, angry at being disturbed, trots

## A Peep at Hungary

along, grumbling and growling to himself all the time. It is safer to send him a good shot before he notices you ; if not, he is up on his hind-legs immediately, and runs towards his foe with outstretched paws armed with long claws.

A bear that has been hit badly is the most serious foe to deal with. It often happens that the bear tries to break through the chain of drivers ; but usually these half-wild men of the mountains are too clever and quick for it, and then the real old-fashioned bear-fight begins. The peasant is armed with only a well-sharpened axe, and lets the bear come quite close to him. In the moment that the bear tries to hug him, the man collects his whole force and strikes the bear in the middle of the forehead with his axe. Of course, this is a matter of life and death to one of them. Very often the bear is killed, but not before he has clawed a good bit of the peasant's skin off his back. If the men go out after the bear, they always try to get beaters that have already been in the fray. The Rumanian peasant if once tried is very reliable ; he is cool-blooded, and will strike at the right moment. The sportsmen armed with guns prefer to be the heroes themselves, although with an express rifle it is not such a brave feat after all compared to the risk taken by the peasant, who will attack the huge beast with nothing but an axe. It is a great thing to be the owner of the skin of a bear killed by one's own hands. Some parts of the flesh are considered very good. The peasants always prepare the soft part of the paws (the pads) for the sports-

## Wild Animals and Birds

men ; they eat the hams themselves, and say they are good.

After the bear, perhaps the boar-hunt affords the most interest, because of the danger attached to it. The wild boar, in a sense, is not as wild as the bear ; it shuns man in every way, but will come out into the fields at night, whilst the bear never visits the haunts of men. The wild boar, like the house pig, usually lives in herds, the oldest and strongest male being the head of the family. Wild boar exist in the Lower Carpathians, the Mátra, Tátra, and Fátra—in fact, everywhere where there is comparative quiet and, at the same time, fields near the forests. It likes the acorn forests the best, but will come out and enjoy a feed on ripe potatoes and maize if it has the chance. The peasant abhors the wild boars because of the great damage they do to the fields. A herd of wild swine will break into and root up a large crop of ripening maize and dig up a potato field in such a manner that all the work of the year is lost. In the olden days the Hungarian noblemen hunted the boar on foot, with nothing but a spear in hand. They had a special breed of dogs that scented the wild boar and drove it to stand at bay, then the hunter intervened and speared the much-worried boar through the heart. This, of course, was the most dangerous form of killing them—on foot, with only a spear to strike with and, in case of a bad thrust, nothing but the hunting knife to stand between him and his life. At the present time there are several ways of shooting the boar. One of these is by driving him ; but this is only

## A Peep at Hungary

possible when deep snow lies over the land—otherwise the herd breaks through the beaters. Or another way is to take up one's stand and wait for them to pass, as they usually keep to certain parts of the forest, and go along their little trodden tracks through the underbush.

The wild boar is only dangerous when wounded. Then he will attack anything, and try to rip his prey to pieces. Another dangerous time is when the old sow hears her little ones squeal; she will charge in that direction, and go straight at the person that she thinks has hurt her young. In the woods, with a good wind, one often comes upon a whole herd wallowing in a miry ditch. The moment they scent one's approach there is a great stampede and a general rush to get away. If a little pig happens to squeal, the old boar will go to it, whether it has been hurt or not. At night it often happens that it will escort any intruder down to the end of his domain, grunting and puffing behind the bushes, whilst the heavy thud of his trot and the clink of the great tusks in his jaws can be heard. The flesh of the wild sucking-pig is considered a delicacy, and that of the boar and sow, when well seasoned in red wine, is also a delicious dish.

Besides the bear and the boar there are plenty of wolves in Hungary, mostly in the Eastern Carpathians. In summer they live in the forests and feed on all sorts of smaller game, and are very timid and not dangerous. In winter, when the mountains and forests are covered with deep snow, driven by hunger they come down into the plains and valleys near the

## Wild Animals and Birds

villages. Large packs can sometimes be seen trotting across the frozen snow, and woe to any lonesome wanderer who encounters them. They are sure to attack him, and not much beyond the top-boots and leather belt of the peasant will remain to tell the sad tale. But shooting the wolf is poor sport. It is the greatest coward when not met with in great numbers; but if one shoots at a pack when they are driven to frenzy by hunger, they will immediately devour a fallen comrade. Many that have been followed by a pack of wolves while sleighing have saved themselves by shooting a wolf from time to time out of the pack, the rest of the pack always stopping to eat their unfortunate companion before taking up the pursuit again.

The lynx, wild cat, fox, mink, and many other smaller wild beasts live in the forests of Hungary. Besides the beasts of prey there are the chamois, living up among the peaks of the Carpathians, most difficult to get at, because from their posts on points of rock they see far and wide, and will retreat to such unscalable heights that no man can follow them. It is a great thing for a sportsman to have a tuft of chamois hair stuck into his shooting-hat; but, of course, it must be of his own shooting.

The stag is to be found living in perfect freedom in the forests, only coming out into the mountain pastures to feed at early dawn and at night. In the month of September, during the breeding season, they can be heard belling out their challenge into the dark night. If two strong bulls get near each other

## A Peep at Hungary

there is a terrible clamour, until they meet on a piece of mossy or grassy ground, where the battle is fought. The clashing of the antlers sounds as if half a dozen duels were being fought with swords, and the fight usually ends in the death or complete breakdown of one of the combatants. In the moonlight it is a wonderful sight, for sometimes over twenty hinds look on. The fight is the supreme moment for the sportsman; if a good shot, he will bring down both fighting bulls and hang the splendid antlers up in his hall. I have seen antlers with twenty-four points in the county of Máramaros in North-Eastern Hungary.

There are also the spotted deer; but these have been imported in the same fashion as the mouflon (wild sheep), although both live in an absolutely wild state now. Then there are the usual roe; but they have very strong antlers and grow to a good size in the wilds of the Hungarian forest. Besides big game of all kinds Hungary is overrun with hares, chiefly in the north-western counties; the shooting affords good sport, and it supplies a savoury dish afterwards. Thousands are sent to the Viennese and Budapest game markets.

There are birds in such quantities that it would be quite confusing to try to give all their names. Up in the north there are eagles and all kinds of falcons and owls, from the big "buhu" right down to the little screech owl, besides other birds of prey. Up in the Carpathians the great woodcock spreads its bristling feathers and capers about wildly; in spring he is deaf

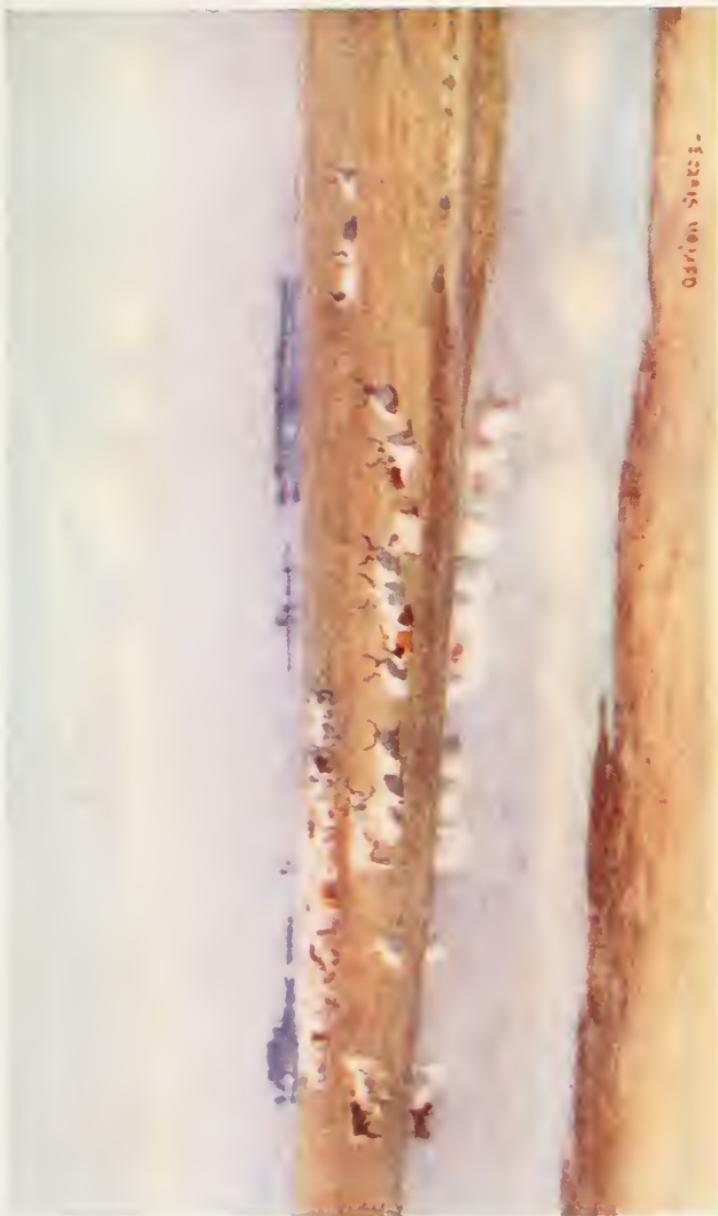
## Wild Animals and Birds

and blind to the approach of the sportsman, so intent is he in showing off all his beauty to his mate. In the autumn and spring there are the long-billed snipe, flitting like lightning in the air, robins, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds, nightingales of all sorts. The yellow-hammer only comes to stay for the two hottest months—July and August. The peasants are not like the Italians, who kill and eat all the birds of song. The Hungarian peasant cares for the young bird if chance brings it in his way. It is well taken care of, fed, and kept out of the way of naughty children and cats. In the fields there are great quantities of partridges, and a good many quails and pheasants in the thickets. But all this is nothing compared to the life and movement in the marshy districts of the Hungarian “alföld” (lowland). In the winter all is quiet and frozen, but in the early spring millions and millions of birds of passage come and nest among the green reeds of the marshes. Numerous species of wild duck, the wild goose, storks, waterfowl in all species, the pelican, and many other exotic birds nest here from year to year. With the irrigation of the fields the birds get less year by year ; yet there is more sport to be had of this kind in Hungary than in any other country in Europe. The swallow, too, is a great friend of the Hungarian peasant, and it is considered lucky to have a swallow’s nest in the house and a stork’s nest on the top of the roof. Peasants will leave open a window or door of their only room the whole summer, so that the swallows should not be disturbed in feeding their young ones or in building their nests.

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Every English boy would laugh at the primitive way they fish in Hungary. Their methods of fishing have not altered during the last thousand years—that is, since the Hungarians took possession of the land. Of course, I am not speaking of the few sportsmen who do a little fly-fishing for trout, because there are so few of them that they are hardly worth mentioning. An English boy will naturally think that the fishing is done by rod. No such thing. Antiquated-looking nets on long poles are dipped sleepily into the water, until chance wills that a fish should just be swimming over it; sometimes a few husks of barley are thrown into the water to entice the fish. This is the general one-man method. Now, if several peasants have rented the fishing, they have a long net, and fish very much in the same way as they do at English seaside places. Two men get into a boat, row out some distance into the river and begin dropping the net, and row back to land again a little lower down; then the net is hauled in at both ends, the fish being in the middle. But if they have bad luck, they don't mind exploding a little dynamite in the water. They are severely punished if caught at this red-handed, but in the great lonely spaces they are seldom discovered using explosives.

Nature is lavish in giving Hungary the best freshwater fish. All the mountain streams abound in trout, but there is only one river where one finds a species of salmon-trout; it grows to a much greater length than those in England—in fact, it attains to the size of a fairly big salmon, but the flesh is much



CATTLE GRAZING ON THE PUSZTA OF HORTOBÁGY.

Baron Szent-Györgyi



## Wild Animals and Birds

lighter, more digestible, and of a very pale pink colour, and almost white when it is young, in both instances meaning its boiled condition. Lake Balaton is celebrated for its "fogas," which is quite a speciality. It is to be found, too, in the Danube, only there the scales are much darker and the flesh coarser. Pike is not considered a good fish, as it has so many bones, the others mentioned having only a few. There is also a kind of carp, with very large scales and of a delicious taste. Then there is a kind of fish without scales, with a shiny skin, a tremendously large head, and long whiskers. It lies at the bottom of running water, and is said to be too lazy to look for food, so it twiddles its whiskers, and the little fish come to see what it's all about, and when the great monster has swallowed them they probably get to know ! These fish are called "Harcsa" in Hungarian and grow to a great size—several yards long, in fact. There is a small species of sturgeon and a large ; these are the monsters of the Danube. They are caught in the Southern Danube, and come up river from the Black Sea. They have mouths like those of the sharks and long pointed noses. It is of great interest to watch the fishermen at work on the ice of Lake Balaton when it is frozen hard, for then it is necessary to cut great holes into the ice and to catch fish with baited hooks and with nets too.

# A Peep at Hungary

## CHAPTER X

### THE CZIGÁNY (GIPSIES), MUSIC, AND DANCES

GIPSIES ! Music ! Dancing ! These are words of magic to the rich and poor, nobleman and peasant alike, if he be a true Hungarian. There are two kinds of gipsies. The wandering thief, who cannot be made to take up any occupation. These are a terribly lawless and immoral people, and there seems to be no way of altering their life and habits, although much has been written on the subject to improve matters ; but the Government has shown itself to be helpless as yet. These people live here and there, in fact everywhere, leading a wandering life in carts, and camp wherever night overtakes them. After some special evil-doing they will wander into Rumania or Russia and come back after some years when the deed of crime has been forgotten. Their movements are so quick and silent that they outwit the best detectives of the police force. They speak the gipsy language, but often a half-dozen other languages besides, in their peculiar chanting voice. Their only occupation is stealing, drinking, smoking, and being a nuisance to the country in every way. The other sort of gipsies consist of those that have squatted down in the villages some hundreds of years ago. They live in a separate part of the village, usually at the end, are dirty and untidy and even an unruly people, but for the most part

## Czigány (Gipsies), Music, and Dances

have taken up some honest occupation. They make the rough, unbaked earth bricks that the peasant cottages are mostly made of, are tinkers and blacksmiths, but they do the lowest kind of work too. Besides these, however, there are the talented ones. The musical gipsy begins to handle his fiddle as soon as he can toddle. The Hungarians brought their love of music with them from Asia. Old parchments have been found which denote that they had their songs and war-chants at the time of the "home-making," and church and folk-songs from their earliest Christian period. Peasant and nobleman are musical alike—it runs in the race. The gipsies that have settled among them caught up the love of music and are now the best interpreters of the Hungarian songs. The people have got so used to their "blackies," as they call them, that no lesser or greater fête day can pass without the gipsy band having ample work to do in the form of playing for the people. Their instruments are the fiddle, 'cello, viola, clarinet, tárogato (a Hungarian speciality), and, above all, the cymbal. The tárogato looks like a grand piano with the top off. It stands on four legs like a table and has wires drawn across it; on these wires the player performs with two little sticks, that are padded at the ends with cotton-wool. The sound is wild and weird, but if well played very beautiful indeed. The gipsies seldom compose music. The songs come into life mostly on the spur of the moment. In the olden days war-songs and long ballads were the most usual form of music. The seventeenth and eighteenth

## A Peep at Hungary

centuries were specially rich in the production of songs that live even now. At that time the greatest gipsy musician was a woman : her name was "Czinka Panna," and she was called the Gipsy Queen. With the change of times the songs are altered too, and now they are mostly lyric. Csárdás is the quick form of music, and though of different melodies it must always be kept to the same rhythm. This is not much sung to, but is the music for the national dance. The peasants play on a little wooden flute which is called the "Tilinko," or "Furulya," and they know hundreds of sad folk-songs and lively Csárdás. Whilst living their isolated lives in the great plains they compose many a beautiful song. It is generally from the peasants and the musical county gentry that the gipsy gets his music. He learns the songs after a single hearing, and plays them exactly according to the singer's wish. The Hungarian noble when singing with the gipsies is capable of giving the dark-faced boys every penny he has. In this manner many a young nobleman has been ruined, and the gipsies make nothing of it, because they are just like their masters and "spend easily earned money easily," as the saying goes.

Where there is much music there is much dancing too. Every Sunday afternoon after church the villages are lively with the sound of the gipsy band, and the young peasant boys and girls dance.

The Slovaks of the north play a kind of bagpipe, which reminds one of the Scotch ones ; but the songs of the Slovak have got very much mixed with the

# Baths and Summer Pleasure Resorts

Hungarian. The Rumanian music is of a distinct type, but the dances all resemble the Csárdás, with the difference that the quick figures in the Slav and Rumanian dances are much more grotesque and verging on acrobatism.

## CHAPTER XI

### BATHS AND SUMMER PLEASURE RESORTS

In Hungary there are great quantities of unearthed riches, not only in the form of gold. These riches are the mineral waters that abound in the country and have been the natural medicine of the people for many years. Water in itself was always worshipped by the Hungarians in the earliest ages, and they have found out through experience for which ailment the different waters may be used. There are numbers of small watering-places in the most primitive state, which are visited by the peasants from far and wide, more especially those that are good for rheumatism. Like all people that work much in the open, the Hungarian in old age feels the aching of his limbs. The Carpathians are full of such baths, some of them quite primitive; others are used more as summer resorts, where the well-to-do town people build their villas; others, again, like Tátra Füred, Tátra Lomnicz, Csorba, and many others, have every

## A Peep at Hungary

accommodation and are visited by people from all over Europe. In former times Germans and Poles were the chief visitors, but now people come from all parts to look at the wonderful ice-caves (where one can skate in the hottest summer), the waterfalls, and the great pine forests, and make walking, driving, and riding tours right up to the snow-capped mountains, preferring the comparative quiet of this Alpine district to that of Switzerland. Almost every place has some special mineral water, and among the greatest wonders of Hungary are the hot mud-baths of Pöstyén. This place is situated at the foot of the lesser Carpathians, and is easily reached from the main line of the railway. The scenery is lovely and the air healthy, but this is nothing compared to the wondrous waters and hot mire which oozes out of the earth in the vicinity of the river Vág. Hot sulphuric water, which contains radium, bubbles up in all parts of Pöstyén, and even the bed of the cold river is full of steaming hot mud. As far back as 1551 we know of the existence of Pöstyén as a natural cure, and Sir Spencer Wells, the great English doctor, wrote about these waters in 1888. They are chiefly good for rheumatism, gout, neuralgia, the strengthening of broken bones, strains, and also for scrofula. On the premises there is a quaint museum with crutches and all sorts of sticks and invalid chairs left there by their former owners in grateful acknowledgment of the wonderful waters and mire that had healed them. Of late there has been much comfort added ; great new baths have been built, villas and new hotels added,

## Baths and Summer Pleasure Resorts

so that there is accommodation for rich and poor alike. The natural heat of the mire is 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Plenty of amusements are supplied for those who are not great sufferers—tennis, shooting, fishing, boating, and swimming being all obtainable. The bathing-place and all the adjoining land belongs to Count Erdödy.

It is a great pity that the best waters are in the hands of immensely rich Hungarian aristocrats, for they are quite devoid of any business instinct. They are too conservative, and do not like nor trust new ideas. Places like Pöstyén would be far greater than Carlsbad if the owners were not so averse to modern methods.

Another place of the greatest importance is the little bath “Parád,” hardly three hours from Budapest, situated in the heart of the mountains of the “Mátra.” It is the private property of Count Kárólyi. The place is primitive and has not even electric light. Its waters are a wonderful combination of iron and alkaline, but this is not the most important feature. Besides the baths there is a strong spring of arsenic water which, through a fortunate combination, is stronger and more digestible than Roncegno and all the other first-rate waters of that kind in the world.

Not only in northern Hungary does one find wondrous cures, it is the same in Transsylvania. There are healing and splendid mineral waters for common use all over the country lying idle and awaiting the

## A Peep at Hungary

days when its owners will be possessed by the spirit of enterprise. Borszek, Szováta, and many others are all wonders in their way, waters that would bring in millions to their owners if only worked properly. Szováta boasts of a lake containing such an enormous proportion of salt that not even the human body can sink into its depths.

In the south there is Herkulesfürdö, renowned as much for the beauty of its scenery as for its waters. Besides those mentioned there are all the summer pleasure resorts ; the best of these are situated along Lake Balaton. The tepid water, long sandbanks, and splendid air from the forests make them specially healthy for delicate children. But not only have the bathing-places beautiful scenery from north to south and from east to west, in general the country abounds in Alpine districts, waterfalls, caves, and other wonders of nature. The most beautiful tour is along the river Vág, starting from the most northerly point in Hungary near the beautiful old stronghold of Árva in the county of Árva. All those that care to see a country as it really is, and do not mind going out of the usual beaten track of the globe-trotter, should go down the river Vág. It cannot be done by steamer, or any other comfortable contrivance, one must do it on a raft, as the rapids of the river are not to be passed by any other means. The wood is transported in this way from the mountain regions to the south, and for two days one passes through the most beautiful scenery. Fantastic castles loom at the top of mountain peaks, and to each castle is attached a

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page of the history of the Dark Ages, when the great noblemen were also the greatest robbers of the land, and the people were miserable serfs, who did all the work and were taxed and robbed by their masters. Castles, wild mountain districts, rugged passes, villages, and ruins are passed like a beautiful panorama. The river rushes along, foaming and dashing over sharp rocks. The people are reliable and very clever in handling the raft, which requires great skill, especially when conducted over the falls at low water. Sometimes there is only one little spot where the raft can pass, and to conduct it over those rapids requires absolute knowledge of every rock hidden under the shallow falls. If notice is given in time, a rude hut will be built on to the raft to give shelter and make it possible to have meals cooked, although in the simplest way (consisting of baked potatoes and stew), by the Slavs who are in charge of the raft. If anything better is wanted it must be ordered by stopping at the larger towns; but to have it done in the simple way is entering into the true spirit of the voyage.

## CHAPTER XII

### BUDAPEST

BUDAPEST is one of the most beautifully situated cities in Europe. Nobody can ever forget the wonderful sight of the two sister towns divided by the wide and

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swiftly flowing Danube, with the steamers and barges on her waters. Buda, the old stronghold, is on one side with the fantastic “Gellért” hill, which is a formidable-looking mass of rocks and caves ; farther on is the lovely royal palace with its beautifully kept gardens clinging to the hillside ; then the oldest part, called the stronghold, which has been rebuilt exactly in the style Matthias Corvinus built it, and which was demolished during the Turkish invasion. Here is the old church of Matthias too, but it is so much renovated that it lacks the appearance of age. Behind the smaller hills larger ones are to be seen covered with shady woods ; these are the villa regions and summer excursion places for the people. Along the Danube are green and shady islands of which the most beautiful is St. Margaret’s Isle, and on the other side of the waters the city of “Pest,” with the majestic Houses of Parliament, Palace of Justice, Academy of Science, and numerous other fine buildings. At the present time four bridges join the two cities together, and a huge tunnel leads through the first hill in Buda into another part of the town. One cannot say which is the more beautiful sight : to look from Pest, which stands on level ground, up to the varying hilly landscape of Buda; or to look from the hillside of the latter place on to the fairyland of Pest, with the broad silver Danube receding in the distance like a great winding snake, its scales all aglitter in the sunshine. It is beautiful by day, but still more so at night, for myriads of lights twinkle in the water, and the hillsides are dotted as if with flitting fairy-lamps. Even those

## Budapest

who are used to the sight look at it in speechless rapture and wonder. What must it be like to foreigners !

Besides her splendid natural situation, Budapest has another great treasure, and this is the great quantity of hot sulphur springs which exist on both sides of the Danube. The Romans made use of these at the time of their colonisation, and we can find the ruins of the Roman baths in Aquincum half an hour from Budapest. During the Turkish rule many Turkish baths were erected in Buda. The Rudas bath exists to this day, and with its modernised system is one of the most popular. Császár bath, St. Lukács bath, both in Buda, have an old-established reputation for the splendid cures of rheumatism. A new bath is being built in Pest where the hot sulphur water oozes up in the middle of the park—the same is to be found in St. Margaret's Isle. Besides the sulphur baths there are the much-known bitter waters in Buda called "Hunyady" and "Franz Joseph," as well as salt baths.

The city, with the exception of some parts in Buda, is quite modern, and has encircling boulevards and wide streets, one of the finest being the Andrassy Street. The electric car system is one of the most modern, while underground and overground electric railways lead to the most distant suburbs. The city has a gay and new look about it; all along the walks trees are planted, and cafés are to be seen with a screen of shrubs or flowers around them. In the evening the sound of music floats from the houses

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and cafés. There are plenty of theatres, in which only the Hungarian language is used, and a large and beautiful opera-house under Government management. There are museums, institutions of art and learning, academies of painting and music, schools, and shops, and life and movement everywhere. At present the city numbers about 900,000 souls, but the more distant suburbs are not reckoned in this number. Those who visit the capital must not think that this city gives any idea of Hungary. It does not. The city is quite cosmopolitan, and in its sudden growth it has developed many new characteristics, to its disadvantage; but it will with time outgrow these little defects. What they are can be left to every one to find out for him or herself. To know Hungary one must go into the country and the smaller towns.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A FEW WORDS ON INDUSTRY

THE chief industries of Hungary are mainly in close connection with agricultural life, the agricultural products supplying the raw materials, which are again turned out as manufactured articles of commerce. In the first instance mention must be made of the corn-mills, the largest of which are in Budapest, and they yield the finest flour on the whole Continent.

## A Few Words on Industry

Then there are sugar factories and refineries in many parts of the country, in some of which the raw sugar is made from a substance extracted from the white beetroot. Potatoes, barley, and other agricultural products are used for distilling spirits, there being many distilleries, chiefly in counties where wheat does not abound. The Government has had mulberry trees planted along the highways, thus encouraging the people to breed the silkworm, and there are silk factories in Hungary which work up the raw material. In "Fiume" there are starch and rice-shredding factories—one of the most important forms of business in the wood trade, which is carried on very actively. Many great forests still exist almost untouched in the "Carpathians," "Transylvania," and "Slavonia"; the difficulty is to bring down the huge trees from their almost unattainable heights. During latter years spinning and weaving factories have been opened. A brisk business is carried on in wine, the cellars in Budafok, near Budapest, being quite a curiosity in their way. They are hundreds of yards long, and are hewn out of the rocks. Here also good Hungarian champagne is made. There are several cognac factories in the country, and excellent beer is brewed, this being one of the best businesses in the country. There are several paper-mills, and they are now beginning the textile industry.

Hungary had the finest porcelain from her own factories of "Herend" almost as soon as the celebrated "Alt Wien" porcelain existed; besides this, there are the beautiful majolica and porcelain of "Pécs" (the

## A Peep at Hungary

maker Zsolnay being known all over the world); but the finest productions of these belong more to industrial art, just as do all the beautiful needlework, lace, and embroidery made by the Hungarians.

Glass is blown in all the hilly districts where the necessary alkalis for it are found. There are factories where the most primitive and also the most beautiful artistic glass objects are made. At last Hungary is beginning to look to the earth she lives on, and it is repaying her for the trouble. With the exception of gold, very little mining was done until recently. Quite suddenly the spirit of enterprise brought in by foreigners is beginning to work, and all the riches of the earth are being brought to light; coal, iron, copper, gold, and many other valuable metals being mined. The salt mines are of old standing and are the finest of their kind. Rocks are being blasted for stone, and finely coloured marbles taken from their hiding-places. All this is little more than the work of yesterday. With one or two exceptions, twenty-five years ago there was hardly any sign of movement in such matters.

Cattle, pig, and sheep breeding are all being carried on extensively; the market for the meat from these animals being chiefly Austria and Italy, beyond what is required for home consumption.

At the moment of writing, the greatest excitement of the day is the wonderful discovery in the form of natural gas, which is now gushing out of the earth in Transylvania, and which will enable the poor Transylvanians to embark upon many new

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branches of commerce. The idea of lighting Budapest with this natural gas is now being discussed, and although it may not be done immediately, there is no reason why this scheme should not in time be carried out.

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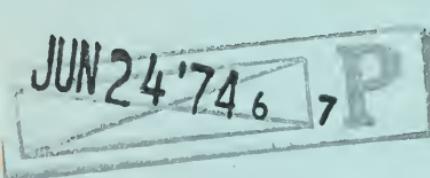
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